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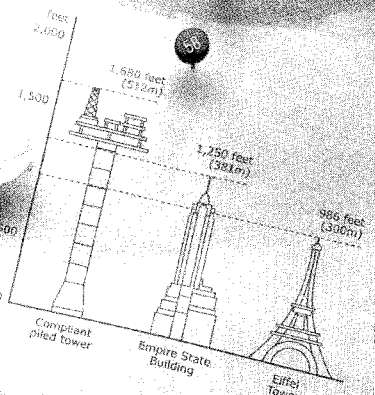
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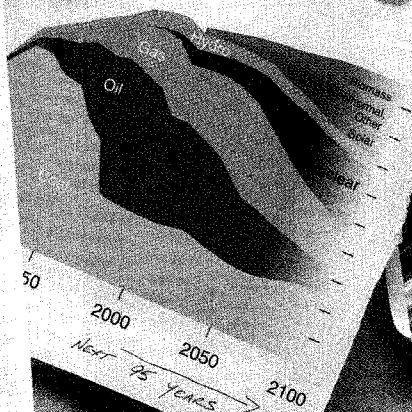
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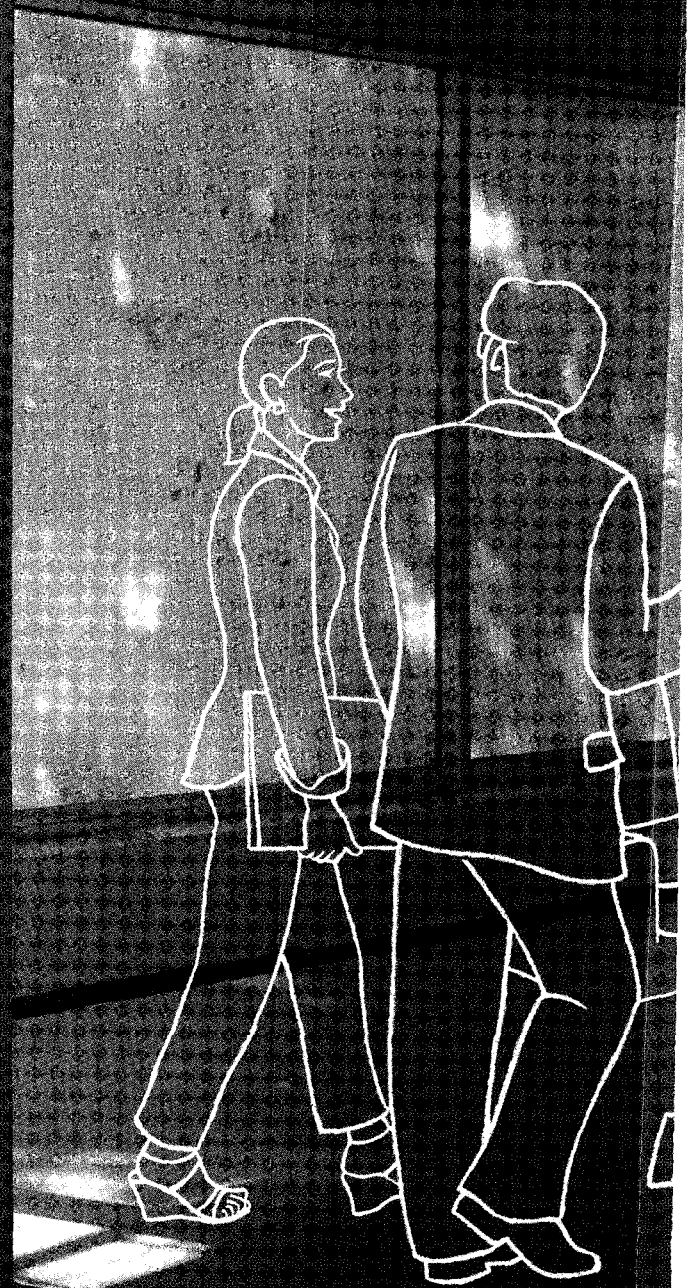
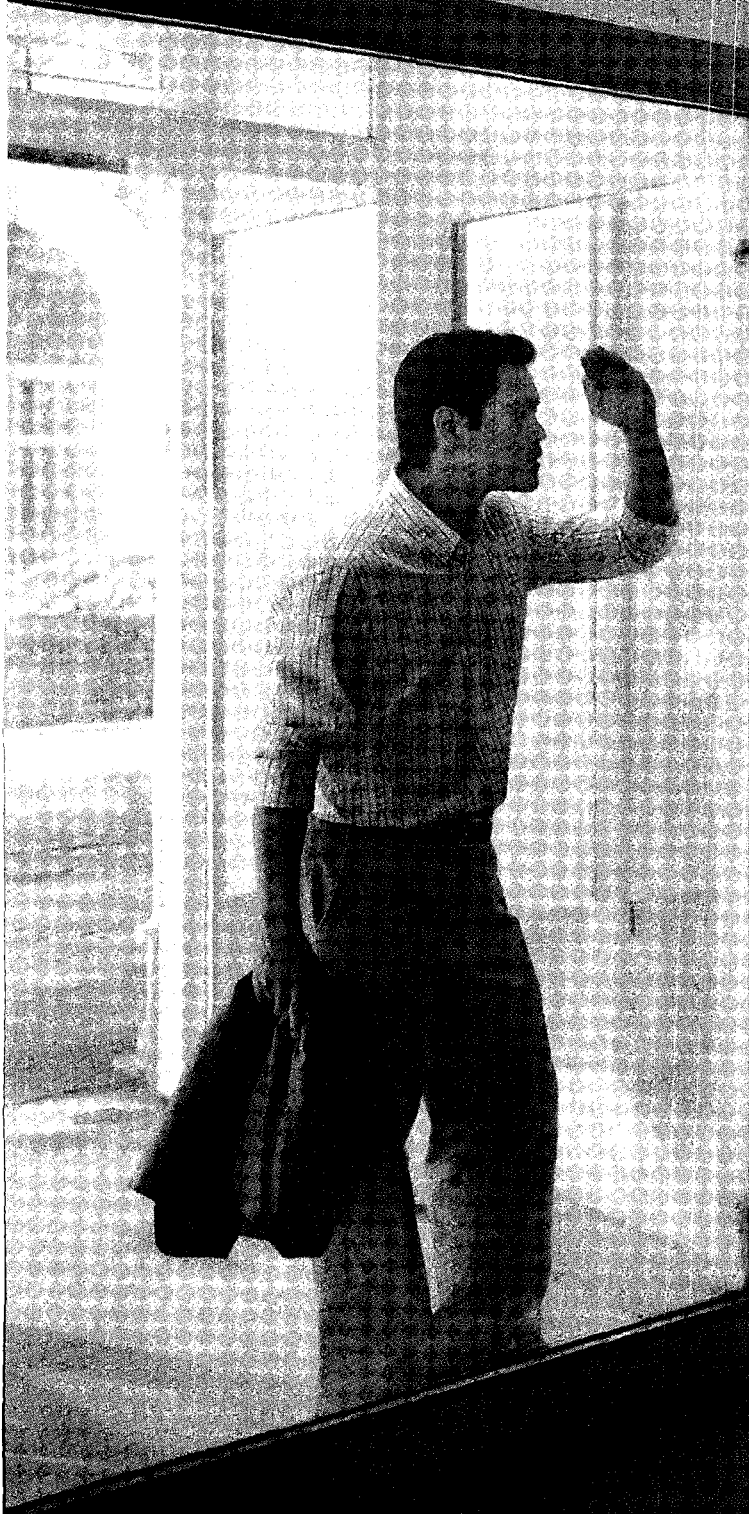
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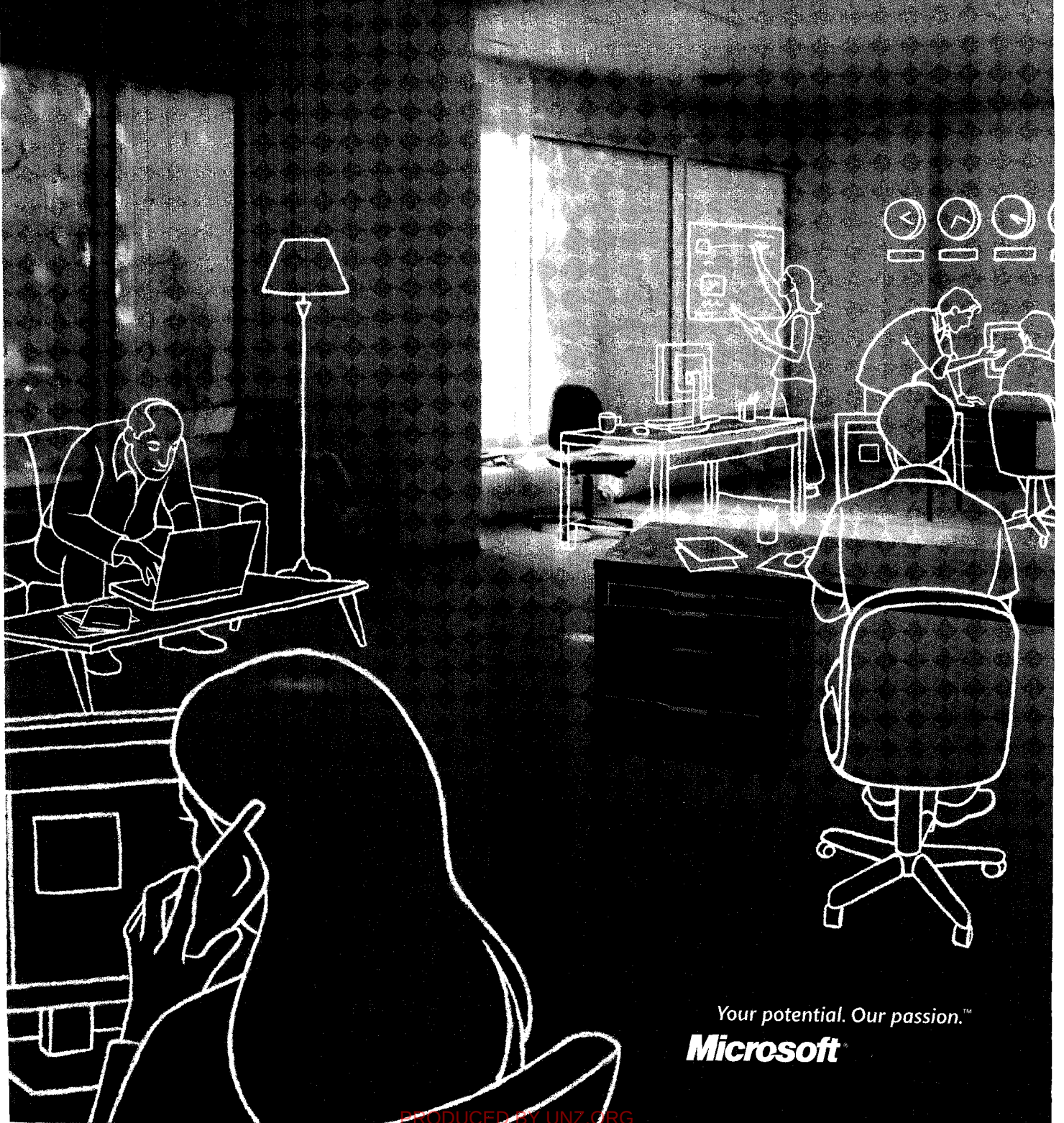
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THE ATLANTIC

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Some think
competition.

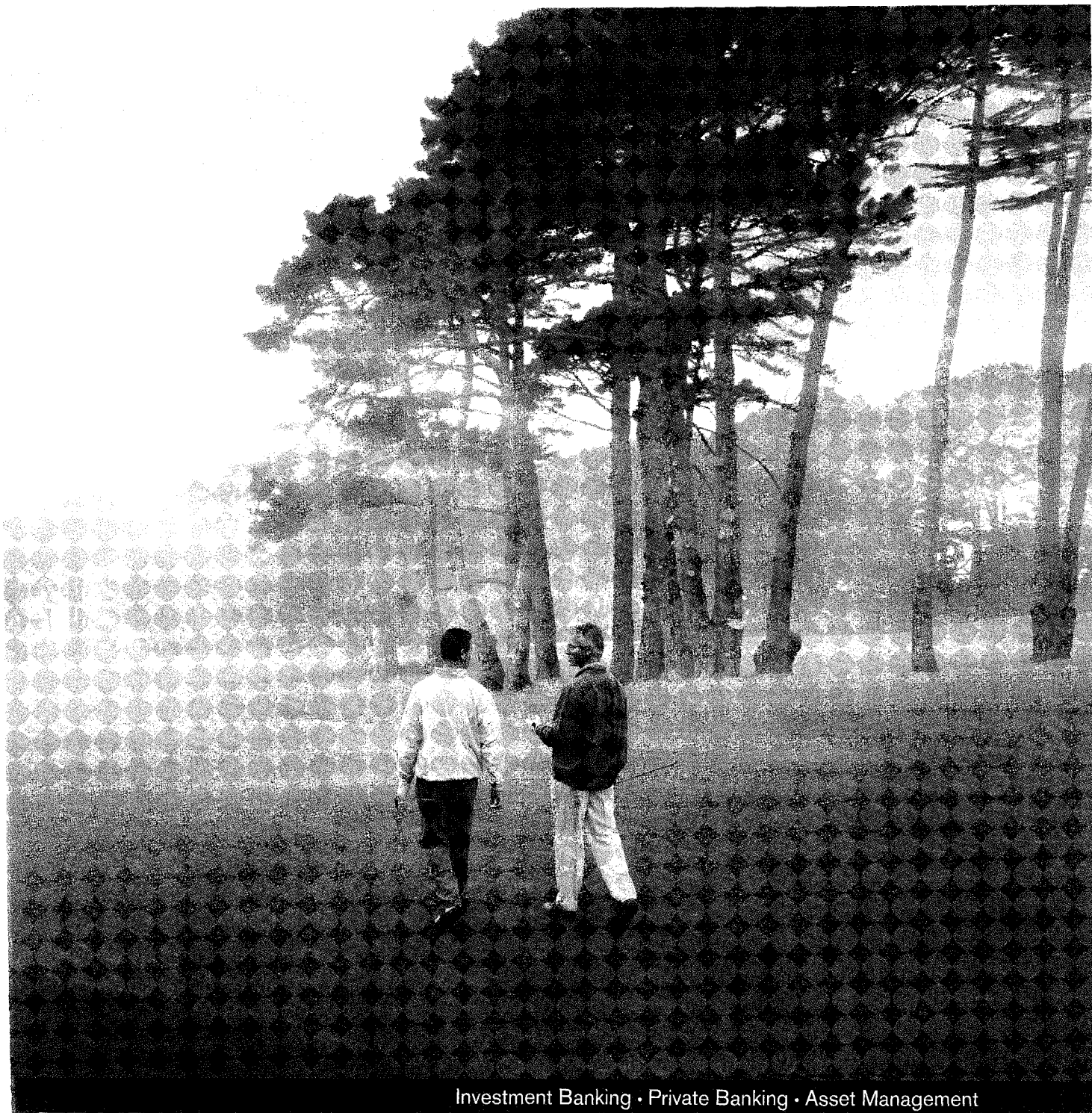
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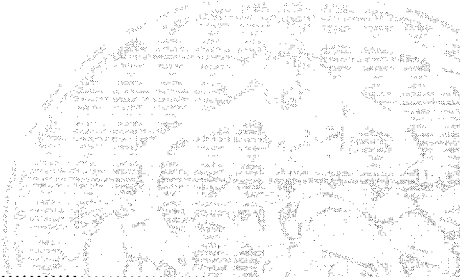
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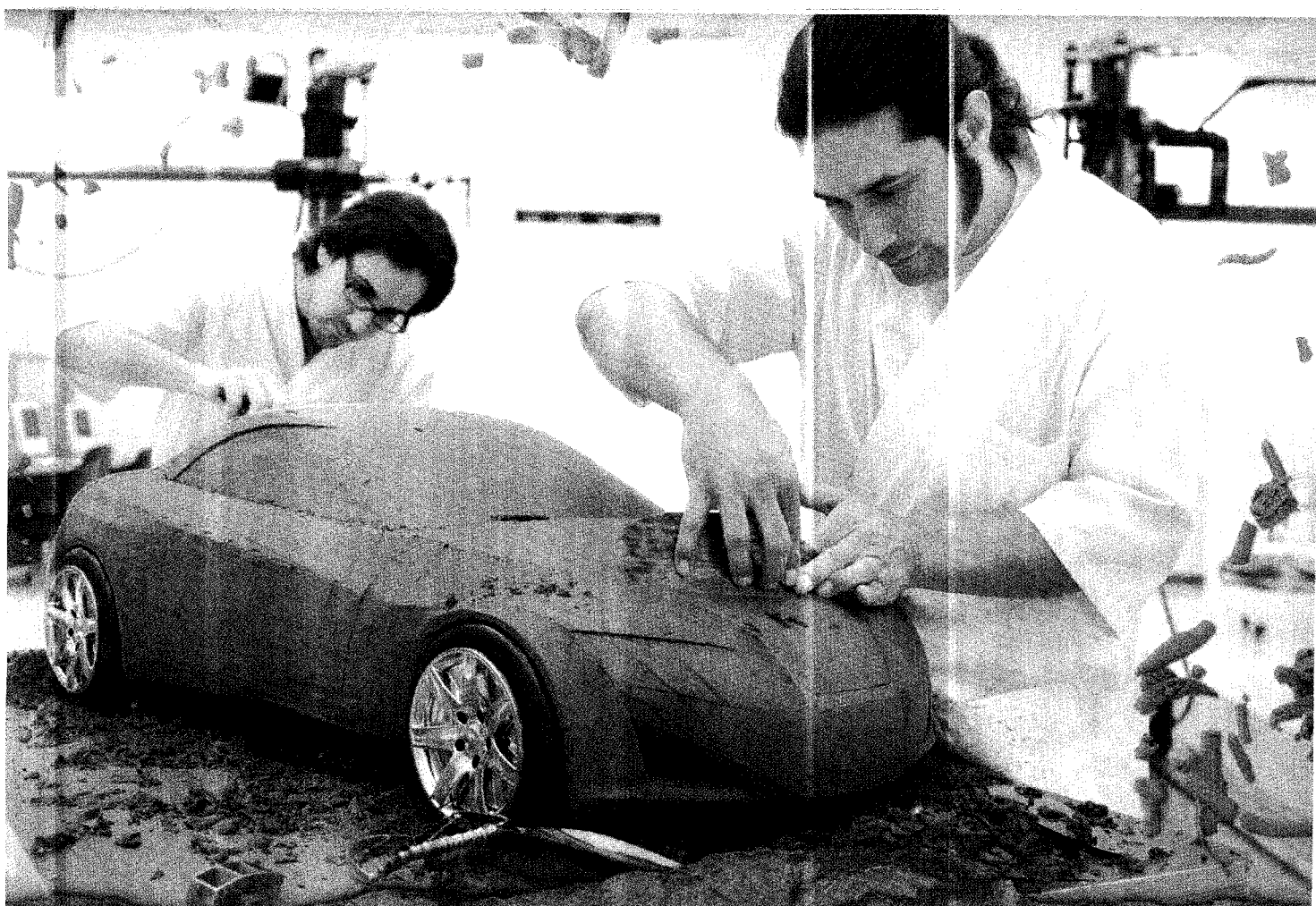
INTERVIEWS: LORI GOTTLIEB

The author of this month's cover story talks about love and the new research that's being produced by Internet matchmaking services.

SPECIAL REPORT: A NEW STRATEGY FOR IRAQ

A bipartisan team of experts comments on how to fix Iraq.

A Web-only complement to Kenneth M. Pollack's article in this issue.



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"BAISER DE L'HÔTEL DE VILLE"

by Robert Doisneau

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Somewhere west of Shenyang, a teenager is stopping for dinner.

Which is why the soybean harvest west of Peoria is not stopping.

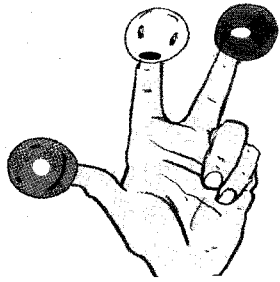
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MARCH 1

Bosnia Closer to Peace

A new constitution is set to streamline the three-headed government of Bosnia and Herzegovina this month. The old system—in place since the 1995 Dayton Accords ended the bloodiest fighting Europe had seen since WWII—had separate presidents for Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, along with fourteen education departments. The new plan features one president and—eventually, it is hoped—a strong parliament and prime minister, both crucial steps toward eventual European Union membership. Bosnian Serb leaders have also vowed to intensify the search for two accused war criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who have been at large in the Serb community ever since a UN tribunal indicted them more than ten years ago.

MARCH 6

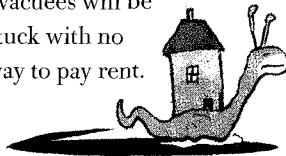
9/11 Conspirator Faces Death

Opening statements begin today in the death-penalty trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, the only 9/11 plotter to be convicted in the United States. Moussaoui pleaded guilty to conspiracy last April, claiming involvement not in the 9/11 attacks but rather in a planned second wave of hijackings that would have flown a 747 into the White House. Prosecutors will try to prove that Moussaoui, already in custody at the time of the attacks, could have prevented them by sharing details with the FBI. If the jury agrees, the French citizen of Moroccan descent could be sentenced to death.

MARCH 1

FEMA Cuts Off Evacuees

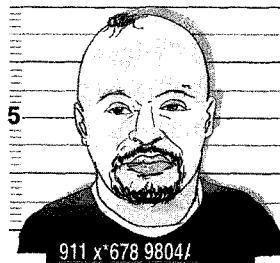
Rental assistance for refugees from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina is due to end today, despite the Federal Emergency Management Agency's initial promise that support would last one year. Cities like Houston, which quickly lined up 24,000 yearlong leases for the displaced, may be left footing the bill. FEMA revised its original policy last November and plans to replace the subsidies with direct payments to individuals, but critics charge that the program is so marred by bureaucratic problems that evacuees will be stuck with no way to pay rent.



MARCH 3-20

First World Baseball Classic

Sixteen nations will face off in six venues around the globe in the inaugural World Baseball Classic, which culminates on March 20 in San Diego. The tourney has forced many foreign-born Major League Baseball play-



CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

ers to decide between their adopted and native countries, and forced the Bush administration to decide between the forty-year-old embargo on Cuba and the much-anticipated grudge match between the U.S. team and the reigning Olympic gold medalists.



MARCH 28

VHS vs. Beta, Round 2

First came videocassettes, then DVDs. Now cineastes are girding for a new battle in the "format wars" over high-definition DVDs, which hit stores today and will shake up the \$26 billion domestic DVD market. As with the VHS-Betamax battle in the 1980s, a showdown looms between HD-DVD, pioneered by Toshiba, and Blu-ray discs, being developed by Sony, Samsung, and Pioneer. Toshiba may gain the upper hand via its earlier debut, lower-priced equipment (\$500 for a low-end HD-DVD player compared to \$1,000 for a similar Blu-ray model), and backward compatibility with standard DVDs.

MARCH 29

Orange Revolution on the Rocks

The hopeful days of orange-clad youths protesting Ukraine's corrupt, Russian-backed regime in the streets

of Kiev are over, replaced by bitter infighting. Many of President Viktor Yushchenko's Western-friendly reforms have stalled due to intra-party squabbles, especially with the populist, left-leaning former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Fired last September after accusations of corruption, she has retaliated with similar charges against the administration and now leads a strong opposition party going into today's elections.



MARCH 29

Libya's Solar-Powered Tourism

Libya's tourism industry has, perhaps not surprisingly, struggled to revive itself since UN sanctions against the onetime terrorist-coddling dictatorship were lifted in 2003. But at last the stars (or, rather, the sun and the moon) have aligned. Experts have determined that the best view of today's full solar eclipse may be had after a four-wheel-drive trip deep into the Sahara Desert, where the eclipse will last longer than anywhere else in the world—more than four minutes. Fewer Westerners are likely to witness this year's event than saw the last eclipse, in 1999, which was visible in Europe. Those who find Libya a bit too sandy can catch a briefer glimpse in Brazil.

—Matthew Quirk



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iraq and the Insurgency

The main premise of James Fallows's article "Why Iraq Has No Army" (December *Atlantic*) is that "America's hopes today for an orderly exit from Iraq depend completely on the emergence of a viable Iraqi security force." Fallows proceeds to present a tightly argued case for why this force has not come into being and details the policy changes that would be required to achieve such a force.

The premise itself is never defended even though a compelling counter-premise has been put forth by highly knowledgeable individuals and appears to be built into the new Iraqi constitution, which Fallows does not discuss at all. The counter-premise is that security and the avoidance of civil war have a much better chance of being achieved through the continued development of largely autonomous regions with virtually independent militias. This alternative was discussed very cogently in an article by Ambassador Peter Galbraith in *The Washington Post* on November 7.

In actuality Fallows's article indirectly gives weight to the counter-premise of regional militias because he shows clearly the overwhelming risks, costs, and time required "to bring an Iraqi army to maturity."

*Robert W. Raynsford, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Retired)
Washington, D.C.*

James Fallows writes, "In Japan, Germany, and South Korea ... none had an insurgency aimed at Americans." This may be true for Japan and Germany (although the German case is somewhat ambiguous), but post-World War II South Korea most definitely

had "an insurgency aimed at Americans." Partly but not entirely backed by North Korea after 1946, the anti-American insurgency began in the fall of 1945 and continued until the North Korean invasion of June 1950. Assassinations, ambushes, and armed clashes cost the lives of thousands of Americans and their South Korean supporters, and countervailing attacks by the emerging Syngman Rhee government could be extremely brutal. The worst violence occurred in April of 1948, when some 10,000 suspected Communist insurgents were killed on Cheju Island, one-third of the island's entire population.

In many ways the U.S. occupation of South Korea from 1945 to 1948—poorly planned, incompetently executed, underequipped, and lacking long-term resolve—was much more like the current Iraq imbroglio than the occupations of Germany and Japan.

*Charles K. Armstrong
Director, Center for Korean Research
Columbia University
New York, N.Y.*

I picked up the December issue at the airport because the article "Why Iraq Has No Army" by James Fallows caught my eye. Before I got to it, however, I read the *Wall Street Journal* editorial that mentioned the article and asserted that Mr. Fallows had not only never visited Iraq but had never interviewed anybody in either the U.S. or the Iraqi governments prior to writing it. After reading that, I decided not to invest the time in reading the article. If I want unknowledgeable anti-American propaganda, I can watch the network news.

*Bob Bronson
Naperville, Ill.*

James Fallows replies:

Regarding Robert Raynsford's discussion of regional autonomy: whether Iraq should emerge as three functionally independent regions, or even as three separate countries, was one of many topics I deliberately omitted from this article, so as to concentrate on America's announced goal of creating an Iraqi security force representing all regions and all religious and ethnic groups. Personally, I view de facto regional independence as nearly inevitable, with both good and bad consequences. But the explicit policy of the United States is to foster the growth of a government that claims the loyalty of all Iraqis, and a military loyal to that government. That ambition is what I examined in my article.

Charles Armstrong is right to point out that the situation in Korea after World War II was very different from those in Germany and Japan. Germany and Japan mounted no serious resistance to their American occupiers, principally because they were utterly defeated societies after many years of all-out war. Koreans suffered violent conflict for eight more years—from September of 1945, when the Soviet Union and the United States divided the Korean Peninsula into spheres of influence north and south of the 38th parallel, through the end of the Korean War, in the summer of 1953. During the first few years of that time, as Armstrong writes, American forces were engaged in what could be called either civil war or counterinsurgent warfare, born mainly of their effort to prop up the Syngman Rhee regime in the South. The reason I mentioned Germany, Japan, and South Korea as a group is that in all of them the United States has maintained a large military presence for many decades, which it would not have done if its troops had been the objects of continuing attacks.

About The Wall Street Journal's editorial page: the allegation that Bob Bron-



The value of seeing the whole forest.

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son mentions was and is preposterous. The Journal's editorial cited an unnamed source in the *Multinational Security Training Command in Iraq*—the organization responsible for training Iraqi troops—and claimed that I “didn’t even contact them while reporting the article or at anytime during at least the past nine months.” That is flatly untrue. I interviewed many members of that organization (among other civilian and military officials I spoke with), including its then commander, Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus, and his deputy. The Journal’s editorial writers would have known this claim was false had they checked with me or this magazine before publishing, which they did not do. Indeed, they would have known this if they had even looked at my article before criticizing it, since it contained lengthy quotes from Petraeus and an explanation of which interview requests the Pentagon press office had approved and denied. Mr. Bronson would have known all this if he had seen the next day’s issue of *The Journal*, which published a retraction of the false claim.

Is God an Accident?

It is gratifying to have as esteemed a scholar as Paul Bloom approvingly refer to my research, as he did in “Is God an Accident?” (December *Atlantic*). But the provocative title and a number of remarks in the essay might lead readers to believe that scientific accounts of religious beliefs, such as the sort he and I both embrace, undermine the truth of religious belief. I would hate for readers to misunderstand the relationship between the science of belief and belief itself.

To use science to attack religion in this way is misguided and ultimately undermines our confidence in science even more than our confidence in religion. If religious belief is only a byproduct of our naturally selected minds having produced no direct fitness benefits in our evolutionary past, so too are a host of scientific beliefs, including the belief in natural selection itself. This observation leads to an uncomfortable problem for the anti-theist. If our brains

(and the thoughts they generate) have arisen only because of their ability to produce survival-related behaviors and not Truth, how can we trust them to tell us the truth about such matters as, say, natural selection? The anti-theist must construct an argument to justify trusting his or her own mind, which could be in the midst of producing “accidental” thoughts and beliefs while constructing the argument! Such an argument, too, must consider the huge psychological literature detailing how human minds systematically get things wrong—from visual perception to higher-order reasoning—apparently to assist in our survival.

Even embracing an evolutionary account of religion, the theist may skate through this epistemological train wreck by insisting that a deity has orchestrated evolution to produce minds that can be trusted to produce true beliefs (at least under certain conditions). Perhaps the deity fine-tuned the nature of the universe from its origin so that our minds—capable of truly knowing the deity—would be inevitable. Or perhaps the deity directed just the right “random” mutations that natural selection then chose, which eventually produced our minds so that they could know Truth.

The point is that the theist may choose to believe in a deity and evolutionary or cognitive scientific accounts of religion without a conflict. The anti-theist’s determination to undercut religious belief via evolution may force abandonment of science itself. If, as Bloom suggests, religion and science will always clash, the blame lies not on the theist but on the anti-theist.

Justin L. Barrett
Institute for Cognition and Culture
Queen’s University
Belfast, Northern Ireland

Paul Bloom draws upon a voluminous body of research, much of it his own work on the development of understanding of self, to construct a wholly plausible argument that a dualist approach to understanding the world is built into humans as a genetic—or more

probably epigenetic—adaptation that has served human societies well, and that this dualism has specific consequences for widespread belief in God.

There are several subtleties in the argument that deserve closer scrutiny. Bloom teeters on the edge of the common trap of discussing science and religion as though they are monolithic. As his tour around various belief systems shows, what we term “religion” encompasses a breathtakingly wide spectrum of beliefs.

Similarly, cosmologists, synthetic chemists, and social psychologists approach their crafts in incredibly diverse ways. While there are certainly hot spots in the relationship between science and religion, exemplified by the clash between evolutionary biology and a particular fundamentalist interpretation of Christianity, the vast majority of what is addressed by each camp has no bearing on the other. In the end the epigenetic-adaptation argument advanced by Bloom is no more compelling than the existence of compound eyes or flagellar motion in bacteria advanced by the intelligent-design community as evidence for the existence of God. Perhaps it is time to calm the shrill voices on each side and recognize that the existence problem is, within the context of what we understand science to be capable of, formally undecidable, and therefore is properly within the realm of faith alone.

Paul W. Bohn
Centennial Professor of the
Chemical Sciences
University of Illinois
Urbana, Ill.

As an unbeliever resigned to the necessity of religion, I appreciate Paul Bloom’s article proposing a source for that mysterious necessity. However, some comments may be in order.

That we have evolved to be creationists may be saying too much. The rural Thais with whom I spend much of my time are not much concerned with the origins of life, and certainly have no commitment to any given

Call me greedy, but I expect my funds to be as solid as my values.



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explanation or story. Rather, they are concerned with the multitude of spirits—of the dead, of trees and streams, etc.—that must be clothed, fed, placated, exorcised. Similarly, both urban and rural Thais are not much concerned with the meaning of things. Often there is no articulate meaning, beyond “It’s pretty.” When pressed, Thais make something up, resulting in conflicting explanations for the same thing. This would seem to call into question Bloom’s inborn tendency to impute purpose where there is none. Still, as Bloom predicts, there seems to be a tendency to impute a designer to the overall scheme of things.

Finally, Bloom need not have worried that Buddhism constitutes a counter-example to his thesis. “While it may be true,” he writes, “that ‘theologically correct’ Buddhism” rejects belief in body-soul duality and supernatural beings, “actual Buddhists believe in such things.” Indeed they do, but “theologically correct” Buddhism also believes in life after death, ghosts, deities, heavens, and hells. These beliefs are central components in the doctrine of every traditional variety of Buddhism. The rational Buddhism of which so much has been made by Western humanists is a creature of their highly selective readings of Buddhist scripture.

Stephen Evans
Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University
Bangkok, Thailand

A trend is apparently emerging in modern thought, which we might call “accidentalism”: everything important is an accident. The accidental human, treading his accidental Earth, stabilized by an accidental moon, whirls through the accidental universe as he worships his accidental god in the language of his accidental mind. It is at least a consistent paradigm. But it is not an explanation, and is hardly more appealing than any other non-explanations (divine agency, to pick one) we might put forward. And if it is not exactly intellectual bankruptcy, it

approaches intellectual penny-wisdom and pound-foolishness.

Nelson Hoffman
Los Alamos, N.M.

Paul Bloom replies:

Much of my argument that belief in God is an evolutionary accident is based on Justin Barrett’s important research, and I’m glad he took the time to express his more general views on religion and science. He notes that the human capacity for science is also likely to be an evolutionary accident, and concludes from this that we have no reason to trust our scientific beliefs. For Barrett, the only way we can ever be sure that anything is true is to trust that God wanted us to have true beliefs and has orchestrated our evolution with this goal in mind.

But there is a better reason to take science seriously. Yes, our intuitions and hypotheses are imperfect and unreliable, but the beauty of science is that these ideas are tested against reality, through observation, prediction, and experiment. The reason to be confident that the Earth revolves around the sun, for instance, does not come from evolution or theology. It comes from the discoveries made by astronomers.

I do agree with Barrett that scientific accounts of the origins of religious beliefs do not necessarily undermine the truth of such beliefs, but I’m less sanguine about the relationship between science and religion more generally. The problem is that religions consistently make claims—about the age of the Earth, the nature of mental illness, the origins of species, the nature of consciousness, and so on—that turn out to be wrong. This clash is not inevitable; one might choose to hold supernatural beliefs that can never be proven wrong, as Barrett does with regard to evolution, or one can restrict religion to statements about value and give up on statements about reality, as Stephen Jay Gould proposed. But neither approach corresponds to religion as it is practiced and understood by most of the human race.

Stephen Evans provides an interesting example of people who do not believe in an afterlife or in a specific account of divine creation. As I discussed in my article, such people clearly exist, but they are the exception: supernatural belief is the universal default.

This claim is nicely supported by Evans’s point that Buddhists hold precisely the same sorts of dualist views as Christians.

Finally, both Nelson Hoffman and Paul Bohn have interesting things to say, but I am mystified by their pessimism. Regarding Hoffman’s concerns, no scientist thinks that everything is an accident. In particular, many aspects of the human brain display complex, adaptive, and non-accidental design, and so are plausibly viewed as biological adaptations. Bohn starts by describing my account as “wholly plausible” but then ends up putting it in the same category as intelligent-design arguments for the existence of God, an analogy that probably isn’t meant to be flattering. In fact, my proposal might well be wrong, but it is a psychological theory of the usual sort, based on the same experimental methods that have been used to study other aspects of mental life. The question of why people have supernatural beliefs is just another scientific problem—though, admittedly, an unusually interesting one.

College Admissions

As a firsthand observer (our only child started college this fall), my view of the college admissions process is different from Ross Douthat’s (“Does Meritocracy Work?,” November *Atlantic*). From his perspective, my daughter and her classmates represent a naked display of power and privilege: graduates of an expensive prep school, many of them are attending the best colleges in the country and paying full freight. But a closer look at the situation reveals an admissions success story.

Overwhelmingly, the parents of my daughter’s classmates were raised in modest circumstances and then hoovered up by the great meritocracy machine. They attended good colleges, worked hard, stayed married, bugged their kids to study more and party less, and saved enough money to pay exorbitant tuition bills.

Should their children be swept aside in favor of less-talented kids just because their parents played by the rules and climbed the ladder of success? I don’t think so. In the coming decades America

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will need the very best leaders to overcome the daunting problems that it faces, and they should be recruited from every income class, even the higher ones.

*Peter K. Clark
Lafayette, Calif.*

Ross Douhat replies:

Peter Clark's concerns are understandable, but no one is advocating that smart, hard-working students from upper-income families be "swept aside" in order to broaden poor students' access to higher education. It's true that any kind of class-based affirmative action would necessarily make some well-off students marginally less likely to be admitted to their first- or second-choice school. But there's very little evidence that a student is seriously disadvantaged later in life by attending Skidmore rather than Stanford, or Colgate rather than Cornell. And American higher education contains so many good schools that, as James Fallows and V. V. Ganeshanathan have pointed out in The Atlantic, nearly every applicant can find "a school that fits his or

her skills, needs, and interests." In addition, many excellent schools are actively competing for high-scoring students from high-income families, showering them with merit aid in the hopes of enticing them to attend. Given these advantages—as well as the preferences that schools already offer legacies, athletes, and minorities—it seems only fair to provide a few more advantages to the disadvantaged as well.

In "The Best Class Money Can Buy" (November *Atlantic*), Matthew Quirk labels enrollment managers as extortionist—concerned only with squeezing more money out of students to maximize revenue and rankings. Any attempts at objectivity pale in comparison to his biased metaphors.

Quirk's article is, however, a fairly accurate portrayal of enrollment management—ten years ago. I was dean of enrollment at Johns Hopkins when it found itself on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* for even considering denying competitive aid to students

who would enroll anyway, and I have seen firsthand the changes in enrollment management over the past decade. In the early 1990s, as my colleagues and I experimented with new enrollment-management techniques as they applied to financial aid, it became increasingly evident that unless we used these tools in a way that was consistent with institutional vision, our work would not survive in the long term. Most of us—not some, as Quirk would have us believe—have adjusted accordingly.

Since 1999, our enrollment-management approach at Dickinson College—clearly aligned with the college's mission—has done just that, and it is working. We have tripled our enrollment of first-year students from underrepresented groups, halved non-need-based aid, and increased average SAT scores by 100 points. It would be hard to argue that our strategy, especially in increasing enrollment of students of color and decreasing non-need-based aid, has benefited the

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college at the expense of the students.

Institutional financial aid is not an entitlement; it is an investment in students who in the aggregate will benefit from and contribute to the college, and we must all be thoughtful and, yes, strategic in the awarding of it. To that end, the independent colleges in Minnesota and Pennsylvania have been studying this issue and are committed to finding ways, within legal limits, to address the imbalance.

Aggressive use of non-need-based aid meant to influence students' enrollment decisions will drive up college costs in the long run and further threaten access if we do not work collectively to stop it. If Quirk's article helps to raise this awareness, it will have served its purpose—in spite of its inflammatory and unbalanced perspective.

*Robert J. Massa
Vice President for Enrollment
and College Relations
Dickinson College
Carlisle, Pa.*

Matthew Quirk replies:

Over six months and many hours of conversation with the leaders of the enrollment-management profession I was told time and again that the industry, as a whole, is only beginning to face up to its role in keeping poor students out of higher education, and, one hopes, make amends. Mr. Massa and Dickinson College are a case in point. He says that much has changed since his days at Johns Hopkins, when he was devising plans to cut aid for prospective students who, by visiting campus, showed they were eager to attend. During his tenure at Dickinson, however, the number of low-income students has fallen year after year.

His increased enrollment of minorities is laudable, but his cuts in non-need-based aid are not as charitable as he suggests. Like many schools in the mid-to late 1990s, Dickinson had been offering huge discounts (averaging over 50 percent of tuition) just to fill seats. Under Mr. Massa, the school found that it could cut costs and rise in the rankings by

reducing non-need-based financial aid and shifting it to the top 10 percent of its class. Dickinson switched from paying too much for average students to buying the very best, but, as so often happens, poor students appear to have been left out of the equation.

Preempting Iran

I was shocked by Terrence Henry's article ("The Covert Option," December *Atlantic*) and his cool suggestion that the United States should engage in a policy of targeted assassinations to slow down Iran's nuclear program—or at the very least encourage Israel to do so. While I'm no fan of the Islamic Republic, I was under the naive impression that assassination as a tool of foreign policy is not only a violation of international law but has also been explicitly forbidden by previous U.S. presidents. Moreover, Israel's policy of assassinations, euphemistically referred to as "targeted killings,"

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is illegal under international law and has received widespread international condemnation.

It may be the case that all moral and legal restraints have been swept away by the Bush administration and that the prohibition of assassinations has joined the Geneva Conventions and the ban on torture as “quaint notions.” However, for a respected publication like *The Atlantic* to seemingly endorse the practice is unconscionable.

Karim Pakravan
Northbrook, Ill.

Terrence Henry replies:

Nowhere in my article did I “coolly suggest” or “seemingly endorse” the use of targeted assassinations by the United States to slow down Iran’s program, much less encourage Israel to do so. Rather, I pointed out the documented history of such programs in the past, and speculated as to whether or not they might occur today, while noting that an assassination campaign like the one carried out by Israel in the 1960s against Egypt and later against Iraq involves serious moral and political considerations. Karim Pakravan’s assertion that such an assassination campaign would be “explicitly forbidden” by the actions of previous U.S. presidents is not entirely accurate. While Executive Order 12333 (signed by President Reagan in 1981) and its predecessor, Executive Order 11905 (signed by President Ford in 1976 after several embarrassing assassination attempts against Fidel Castro came to light), prohibit political assassinations by U.S. personnel, each president has the right to modify or nullify them, which at times they have. President Reagan authorized a missile strike against Muammar Qaddafi in 1986, the first President Bush ordered strikes against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, and President Clinton directed them against Osama bin Laden in 1998. Such decisions are a matter of presidential policy, not law, and just as the current administration has seen fit to disregard these executive orders when going after terrorist groups, it could very well decide to do the same with Iran.

Declare War

Leslie H. Gelb and Anne-Marie Slaughter (“Declare War,” November *Atlantic*) argue for “a new law ... requiring a congressional declaration of war in advance of any commitment of troops that promises sustained combat.” Their most compelling argument is the painful litany of leadership failures at the highest levels of the executive branch.

These failures occur because of poorly defined or altogether forgotten missions, which in turn result from the repeated error of confusing freedom with democracy, resulting in dull-witted efforts at nation-building. What is not clear is how involving Congress could possibly result in any improvement.

Would not Congress argue endlessly about the meaning of the phrase “that promises sustained combat”? With the advent of nuclear weapons, the nature of war has changed. A-teams and HALO drops will not lend themselves to congressional interference and debate, which partisan politicians are sure to attempt. Nor would the ultimate horror of a rogue state preparing to use its nuclear weapons.

The opportunities for the rigorous fact-finding and thoughtful debate the authors propose will be both brief and rare, and the risks the authors acknowledge too great to contemplate. Will a nuclear-armed rogue state, with known plans for a preemptive strike, courteously wait until our debate is finished before pushing the launch button? Will we ignore ongoing genocide while we argue over the meaning of the word “sustained”? The devil is in the details.

No law, even one so thoroughly based in the Constitution, can ever take the place of great leadership in times of strife, or turn self-serving politicians into statesmen and stateswomen. Perhaps the matter is hopeless—at least until we begin to think about term limits.

Don Garland
Arden, N.C.

I agree wholeheartedly with Leslie H. Gelb and Anne-Marie Slaughter that the United States needs a Congress that will reassert its war powers and put an end to undeclared wars. A sobering declaration of war should be the first step in supporting future American soldiers. This mechanism is also the only practical implementation of a “just war” policy that we are ever likely to see.

Sadly, the proposal of a law to force senators and representatives to follow the Constitution in this matter is an obvious nonstarter. The solution is the ballot box. Sorry, Hillary Clinton. Sorry, John McCain. I will be looking for other candidates to support.

Jim Wolfe Wood
Stillwater, Minn.

Leslie H. Gelb and Anne-Marie Slaughter are correct: the time has come for Congress to reassert control over the deployment of troops. Perhaps an economic incentive would force Congress to thoroughly vet a future president’s decision to wage war.

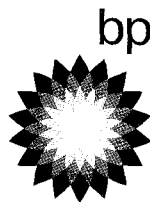
Specifically, I propose a war tax that would be automatically imposed when Congress approved the use of force and automatically repealed once the reason for congressional authorization was addressed. Such a tax would force legislators to recognize that a vote to authorize the use of force would place a burden on all their constituents, not just those serving in the military. This awareness would most likely compel Congress to demand a clear strategy, timetable, and exit plan in advance.

Another benefit of a war tax would be that the revenue generated could be directed exclusively toward increasing military pay. This would give our all-volunteer military the financial resources to recruit qualified individuals in the midst of a hot war.

Paul Poast
Department of Economics
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

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Leslie H. Gelb and Anne-Marie

Slaughter reply:

The letters all raise thoughtful and useful points of skepticism, which we ourselves expressed. Two points should be clear, however. First, nothing we propose would stand in the way of the president's power and need to respond in emergencies. Second, the alternative to doing something along the lines we propose—an effort to take the business of going to war more seriously—is the continuation of a process careless of lives and country.

Lolita

I was with Mr. Hitchens most of the way through his masterful and thought-provoking return to *Lolita*, the book and the girl (“Hurricane Lolita,” December *Atlantic*). I sipped my milky, hot coffee and sat in the sun, almost purring. His clear writing was an antidote to the slumber party of twelve-year-old girls I had just weathered, and I can guarantee there was nothing sexy about any one of them: orange ink spills on the carpet, generalized shrieking, chomping on Pringles, “ewwww”ing to the strains and pornographic snippets of “My Humps” or some such “song.”

I was reminiscing about the *Lolita* movies, too, as I read along—the sexual indecisiveness of James Mason and the vulnerability of Jeremy Irons (who I doubt could or would seduce a willing flea, at least in that anemic character he inhabited). It’s really the men I focused on in these films; the girls were purely uninteresting—to quote my old English professor, like the creamy surface of a yogurt cup before you dig in.

I jarred to a stop, though, upon reading Hitchens’s line, “Arresting, as well as disgusting, to suddenly notice that Lolita ... would have been seventy this year.”

Why are old women so knee-jerkingly “disgusting?” I am telling you that if Humbert Humbert had not thrown a clot in prison, and if he had made it like so many singly driven men to age 100, he would have still been moved by

his seventy-year-old Lolita and found “that I loved her more than anything I had ever seen or imagined on earth or hoped for anywhere else.” Obsession is obsession. Age has nothing to do with it. He was not a generalized pedophile, for my money, or he would have horned onto her friends at every turn. He was in love. Charles and Camilla—hello?

Mary Jane Gore
Charlottesville, Va.

Advice & Consent

Matthew Quirk’s list of rapidly reconstructed cities (“Cities Rising,” December *Atlantic*) suggests that agonizing over what new form New Orleans should take is pointless, since it will just be replaced in kind anyway. But the rebuilding imperatives that motivated each of the examples on Quirk’s list are absent in New Orleans. The thriving mercantile cities of Chicago, San Francisco, and Galveston, Texas, were destroyed during the great era of American city-building, and the economic pressure to rebuild them was enormous. Warsaw, Poland, and Tangshan, China, were rebuilt by totalitarian regimes, each for its own reasons. It is not clear that any such imperative animates the rebuilding of New Orleans, other than perhaps a moral one, which is ambiguous at best. (Does it really make sense to put low-income residents at risk again?)

American cities are in a Darwinian struggle for survival. Those that can attract knowledge workers and tourists are prospering, and those that cannot are shrinking. Other than the venerable French Quarter and the Garden District, which are situated on higher ground and consequently were not flooded, much of New Orleans was on the losing end of that survival struggle before Katrina. In the absence of private initiative to rebuild it, only the federal government could marshal the necessary resources. But with Republican voting power in suburban and rural areas, no national urban policy, and a mounting federal deficit, it seems

unlikely that anyone can muster the necessary political will.

Matthew J. Kiefer
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The study highlighted in Primary Sources (December *Atlantic*) on washing of hands in public restrooms fails because its design is flawed and the data are polluted. Some subjects who ordinarily do not wash their hands were shamed into doing so by the presence of the investigator, tally sheet in hand.

I am among those who do not wash their hands after urinating. Why should I? I don’t urinate on my hands. Furthermore, T. E. Lawrence, who should know, says camel’s urine is antiseptic. Many were the wounds he cleansed in wadis scattered over the Arabian Desert. Why not human piss? Captain Bligh and his loyal crewmen drank urine on their epic sail to safety.

It makes more sense to wash your hands before urinating. Washing your hands after urinating is fetishism.

Charles Perrone
Moorestown, N.J.

P. J. O’Rourke’s beautiful piece on the new Airbus 380 (“The Mother Load,” November *Atlantic*) has one minor error: the previous record-holder for takeoff weight is not the Antonov An-124 (similar to our Lockheed C-5 Galaxy) but its beefed-up six-engine version called the An-225. Only one was built before the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, and it still flies under the flag of the Russian Federation.

Arthur C. Segal
Springville, Ala.

P. J. O’Rourke replies:

No doubt Arthur Segal is correct about the An-225. On the other hand, we both may be wrong. I have just returned from a holiday accompanied by my wife, two daughters, baby, portable crib, car seat, fifteen suitcases, eight pieces of carry-on baggage, and all the toys the grandparents gave the kids for Christmas. The Boeing 737 upon which we traveled—that may be the heaviest airplane to ever take off.

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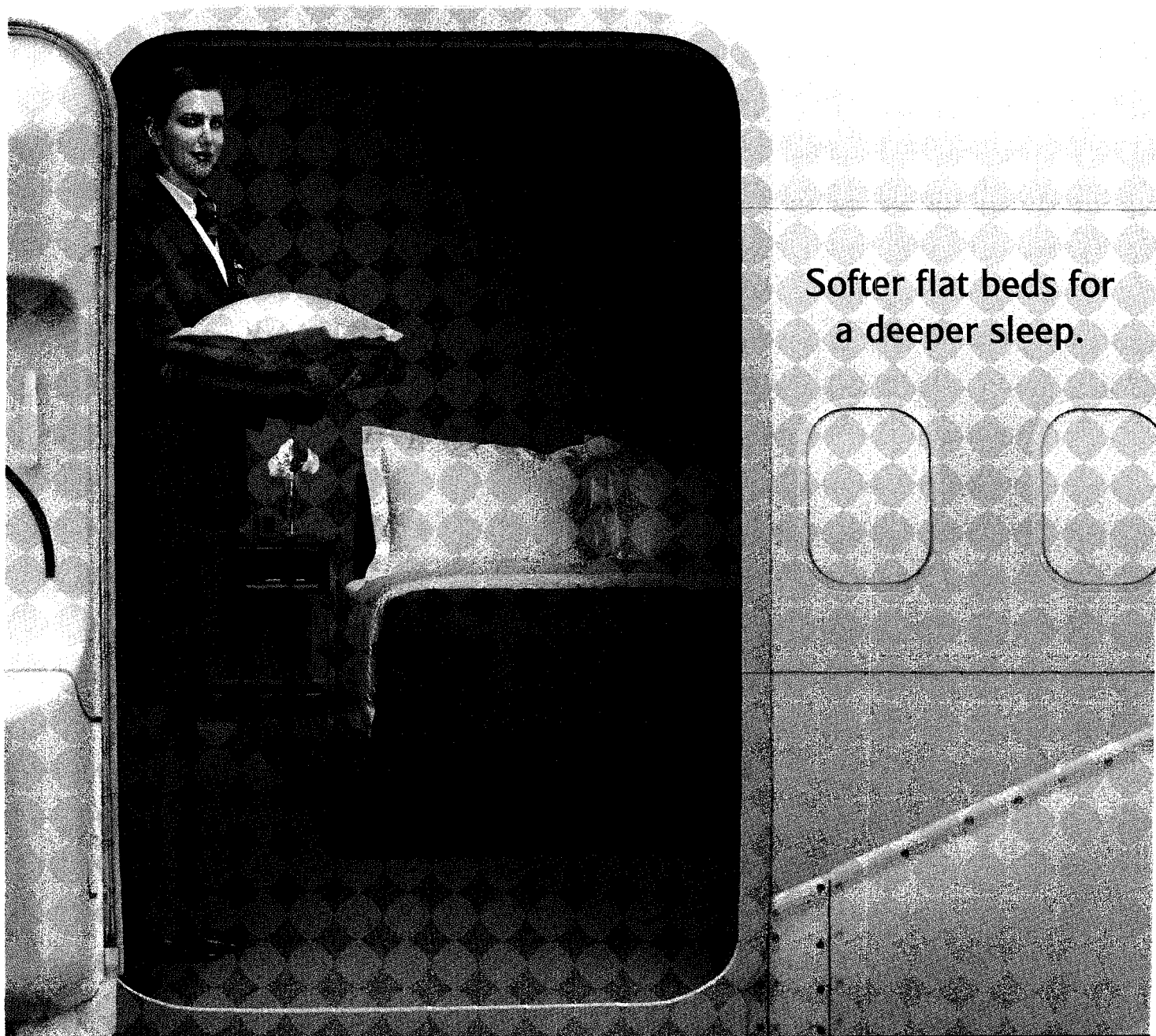
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COMMENT

Demolition Men

*Ariel Sharon and Junichiro Koizumi point the way
to a centrist resurgence in American politics*

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

Ariel Sharon could boast of as daring a military and political career as anybody since Andrew Jackson, but he saved his biggest surprise for late in the game. The champion of the Right conquered the Israeli center. In doing so, he transformed Israeli politics. More than that, he showed the way toward transforming America's.

Long before he became prime minister, Sharon was a founding father of both the Israeli settlement movement and the hawkish Likud Party. Yet it was Sharon who turned against his political base and his party to withdraw Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip last year. The public rewarded him with one of the highest approval ratings ever accorded a second-term Israeli prime minister, but Likud's hard-line core remained bitterly unreconciled. And so in November Sharon, having run over his party but not won it over, abandoned it to form a new party, Kadima ("Forward").

"With Sharon's new party," Yossi Klein Halevi wrote in *The New Republic* shortly after Sharon bolted Likud, "Israel's centrist majority has finally found a political home." Until Kadima, Halevi noted, not one of the many parties in the Knesset represented centrist Israelis. Tectonic pressures had been building up in the Israeli center for years. When Sharon finally released them, they caused an upheaval: a new party, a new political landscape, and the marginalization of partisan extremists who not long ago had seemed impregnable.

Sharon was felled by a major stroke in January, leaving Kadima, and the rest of Israeli politics, atilt in midair. Still, his late-game maneuver deserves Americans' notice, because Israel is not the only democracy where a neglected center is restive. The United States has no majority party. Republicans and Democrats are at rough parity, each commanding about a third of the country, each captive of a partisan base that is well to the electorate's right or left. Neither party can govern except in coalition with independent voters, most of them moderates and many of them dismayed. By the end of last year, polls showed, independents had lost confidence in President Bush and his party. But unhappiness with Republicans did not translate into enthusiasm for Democrats. Independents rated *both* parties unfavorably. The center believed it had nowhere to go.

In a democracy, tectonic pressures can only build so long before making themselves felt. The question is whether adjustment comes in the form of a shock, as in Israel, or in smaller rumbles, as happened recently in Germany. There, in elections last September, voters refused to give either major party a majority, forcing the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats into an uneasy coalition.

The American equivalent of a coalition government is divided control in Washington. Political hand-cappers say it is possible that the Republicans may lose one or both chambers of Congress this fall. That would drag Washington's policies toward the center and probably make independents happier. What it would not do is create a political home for moderates or a popular majority for either party—just a tug-of-war between extremes.

Sharon pointed toward an alternative—as does Junichiro Koizumi, the Japanese prime minister, who is in some respects even more daring than Sharon, if that's possible. His Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP, has governed Japan for all but a few months of the past five decades; the Japanese public has long been tired of its rule but has seen no credible alternative. Capitalizing on the public's disenchantment, Koizumi won leadership of the party and the country in 2001 by saying he would “change the LDP to change Japan.”

For a while he appeared to settle for sloganeering, but when the old guard of his party sought to block his most ambitious economic reform (a privatization of Japan's postal savings system, which serves as a slush fund for special interests), Koizumi did the unthinkable. He called a snap election last September, announced it would be a referendum on his reform plan, and proceeded to campaign against his own party, going as far as to recruit candidates, known as “assassins,” to challenge LDP dinosaurs in their own districts. Imag-

ine President Bush recruiting congressional candidates to run against Republican grandees and you get some notion of Koizumi's audacity.

Not only did the assassins knock off many of Koizumi's adversaries; the voters gave the LDP its largest parliamentary majority since 1986. The LDP's main rival, the Democratic Party of Japan, had in fact proposed reforms bigger than Koizumi's, but was trounced. Koizumi had captured the center, positioning himself and—against its will—his party as the happy medium



between too little reform and too much. Koizumi's personal popularity attained unheard-of levels. “He is so popular,” reported *The Economist*, “that when he was found to have served Mimolette cheese, a pricey French import, to a colleague in his office, Japan's biggest online shop sold out of the stuff.”

Even the most boneheaded of U.S. partisans might wonder if there is something to be learned from Sharon and Koizumi. When the political center is empty, a bold politician can achieve spectacular results by filling it, even—no, especially—if he throttles his own partisan base to do so.

Can a base-breaking, center-stealing strategy succeed here? Not easily. In 2000, Senator John McCain ran against the party establishment for the Republican presidential nomination, and lost. He might hazard an insurgent candidacy again in 2008,

but then again he might not. Even for a figure as popular and charismatic as McCain, the gantlet of primaries poses a formidable challenge to any candidate who bucks the partisans.

In Israel and Japan, Sharon and Koizumi betrayed their bases only *after* they were firmly ensconced as premiers and party leaders. If Bush, as sitting president, were to turn against his party's right, the political effect would be electrifying. But Bush, though neither an ideologue nor an extremist, is a partisan's partisan. He believes the lesson of his father's defeat in 1992 is “Dance with the one who brung you.” Though he has proved willing—more willing than is generally acknowledged—to make excursions off the reservation by day (campaign-finance reform, the Medicare prescription drug entitlement, immigration), he is careful to come home every night to his partisan bedfellows.

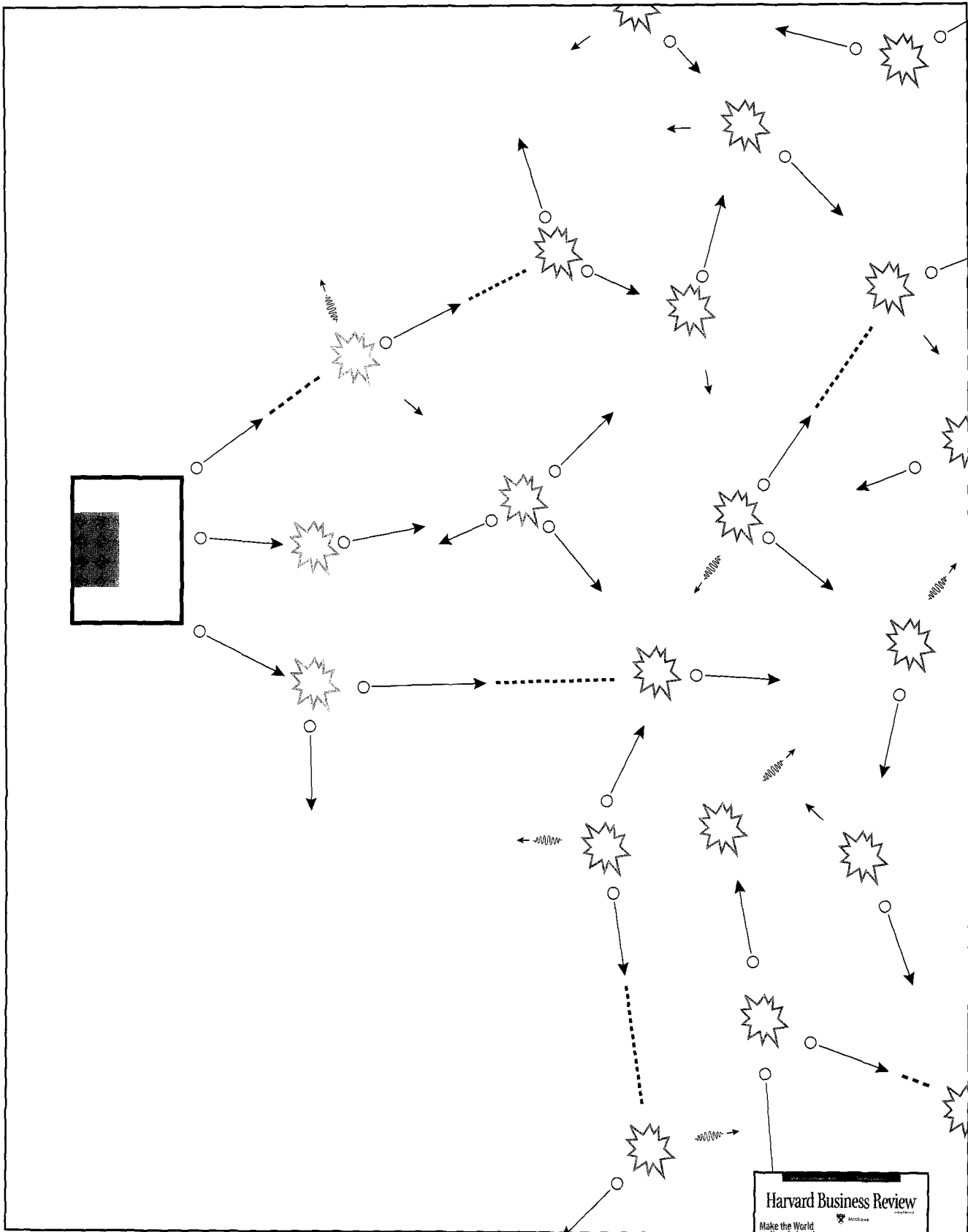
So perhaps the ground will not shake until some far-future president breaks with his (or her!) party base. Perhaps we will muddle through with two immoderate minority parties sharing Washington and annoying the country.

Perhaps. Still, there are at least two reasons to think that base-breaking might happen here, and sooner than many people imagine. One is the immense potential payoff: whichever party finds and holds the political center, and does so while retaining the more moderate portion of its traditional base, will be the country's majority party, possibly for years to come. Doubters are referred to Tony Blair, 10 Downing Street, London.

The second reason? Simply this: for a major politician to demolish his own party base seems unimaginable right now in the United States, but it also seemed unimaginable in Israel and Japan—until it happened. America may or may not find a demolition man, but it is ripe for one. ▀

Jonathan Rauch is a correspondent for The Atlantic and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN RITTER



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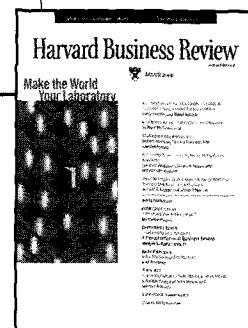
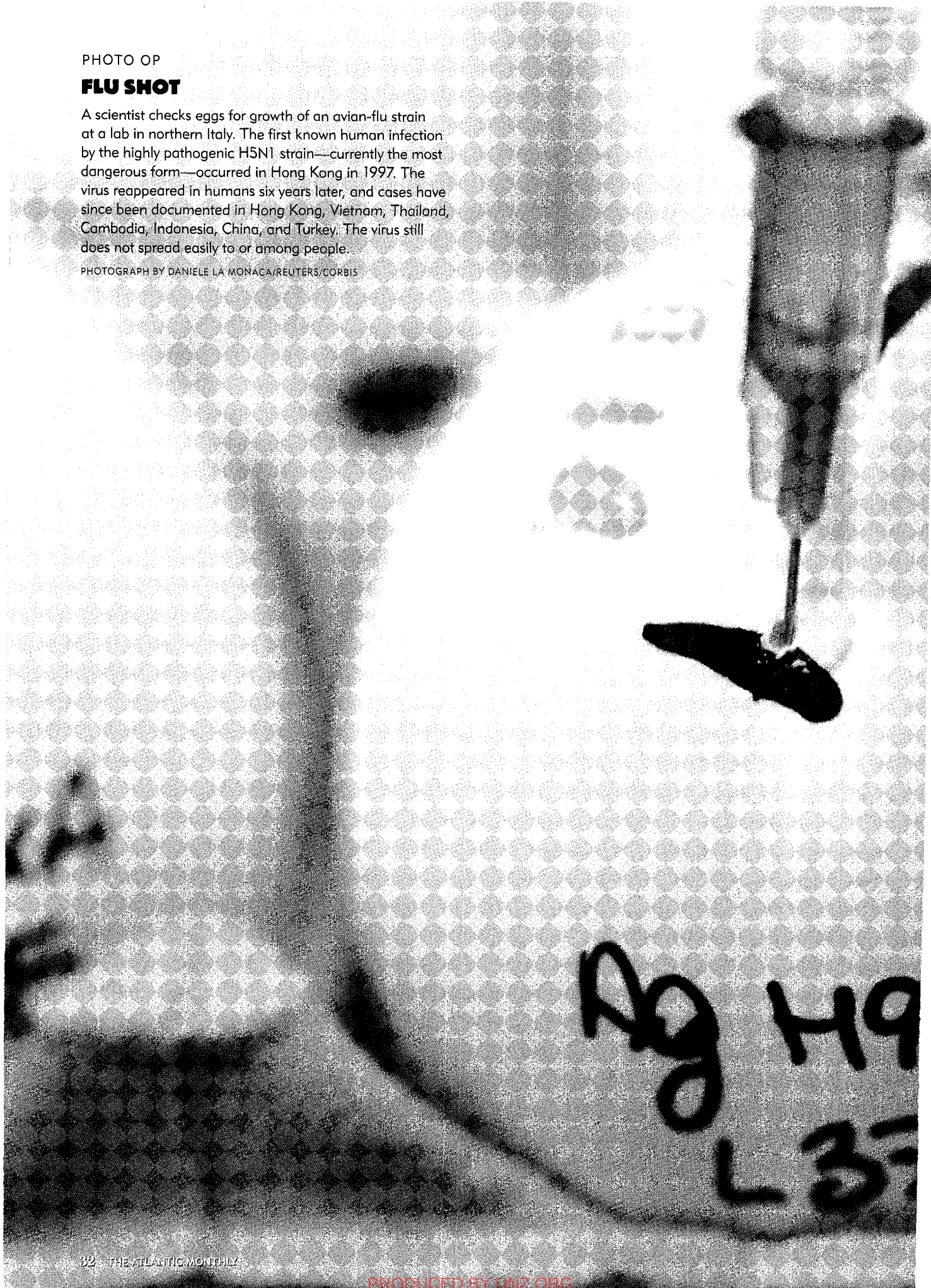


PHOTO OP

FLU SHOT

A scientist checks eggs for growth of an avian-flu strain at a lab in northern Italy. The first known human infection by the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain—currently the most dangerous form—occurred in Hong Kong in 1997. The virus reappeared in humans six years later, and cases have since been documented in Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, China, and Turkey. The virus still does not spread easily to or among people.

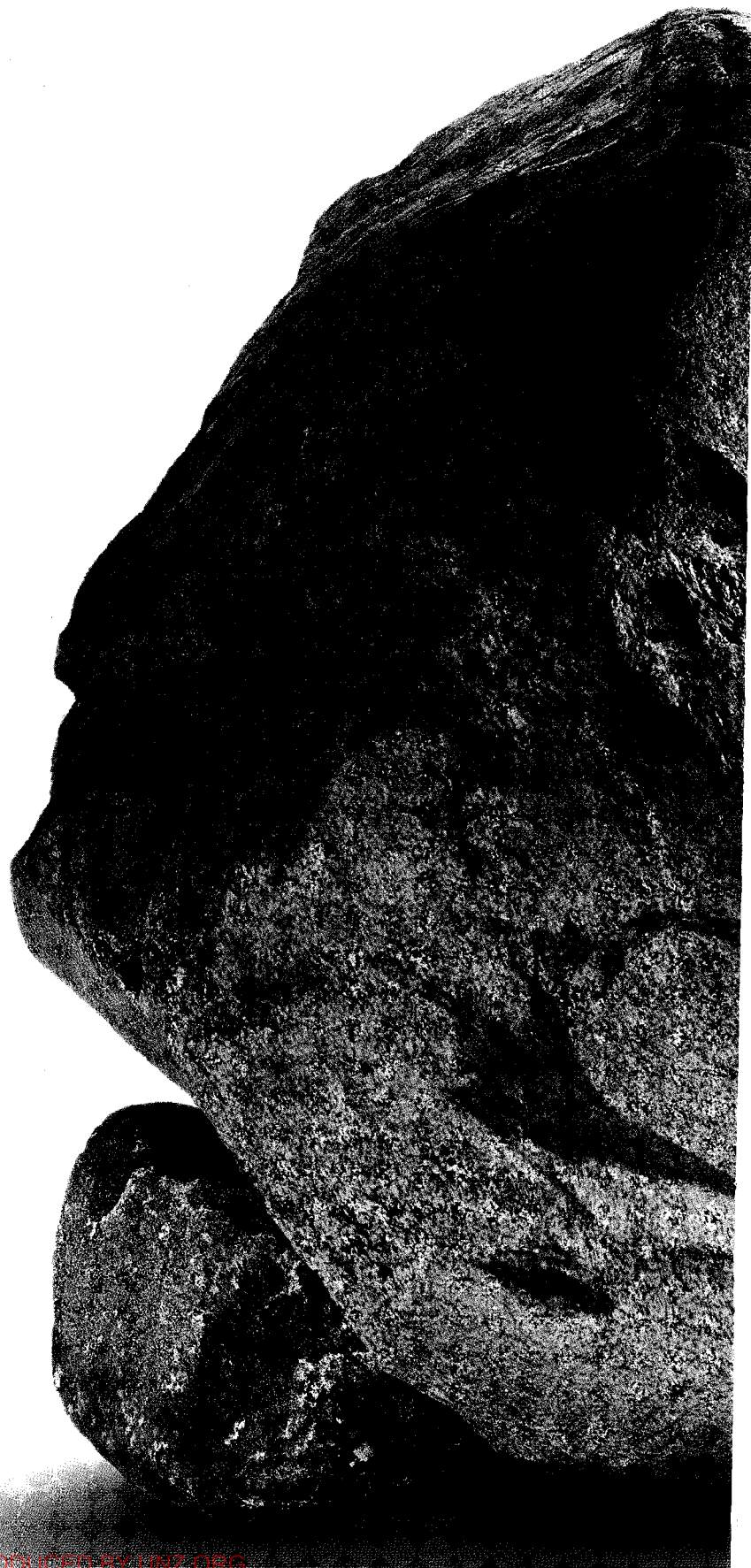
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CROSS-EXAMINATION

Justice Delayed

Why we still don't have a way to put terrorists on trial

BY BENJAMIN WITTES

Whatever happened to Zacarias Moussaoui?

Moussaoui is the only person criminally charged in the United States for taking part in the September 11 conspiracy. He pleaded guilty to the charges against him last spring without a deal to spare him the death penalty. So he now faces a jury trial, with opening arguments scheduled for early March, to determine his sentence.

Given the magnitude of the crime and the fact that Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent, admits his guilt, he seems unlikely to be spared—though at the time of the attack, he was locked up on federal immigration charges. If and when he is condemned to die, all sides in the debate over the war on terrorism will likely claim vindication. The Bush administration will embrace the verdict as a big win. Civil libertarians will argue that Moussaoui's conviction in a domestic, civilian court shows that the regular justice system is up to handling big-time terrorism trials. The administration's critics will use the case to discredit the military tribunals the Pentagon has created at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba.

Don't believe a word of it.

Why not? What will the real message of the Moussaoui trial be?

Moussaoui's case shows only that American courts can try an al-Qaeda figure if the government lucks out. Moussaoui is a nutcase who tried to represent himself, filed crazed pleadings, and made ludicrous courtroom speeches in which he repeatedly compromised any potential defense by admitting to key elements of the charges against him—for example, that he was a member of al-Qaeda, pledged to attack America. For months, he refused to cooperate with his court-appointed lawyers. And when

the judge took away his ability to act as his own counsel, he pleaded guilty—thereby relieving the government of the burden of proving a tricky case.

Despite the lucky breaks, if the government ultimately succeeds in getting the death penalty, it will have taken an extraordinary effort: five years of litigation up and down the appellate ladder, millions of dollars, and a docket so long that a mere computer listing of the public documents filed in the case takes up over 160 pages. The case exposed daunting problems in trials like these: how to handle massive volumes of classified information and, more particularly, potential witnesses whom the government is holding and interrogating overseas and refuses to produce for security reasons. A defendant more inclined to demand his rights and less inclined to turn the courtroom into a circus could have made these proceedings more difficult than Moussaoui did.

Trials in federal courts are the only option for U.S. citizens. For foreigners, however, particularly overseas, the government has more options. After Moussaoui, don't expect high-value al-Qaeda detainees to be tried in American courts if the government can avoid it. One such case, of an al-Qaeda suspect named Ali Saleh Kahlal al-Marri, has already been dropped, with the defendant turned over to the military as an enemy combatant. Even while it claims victory, the government will test these waters again only if it has no choice.

The case's larger lesson is that the administration was right after September 11 when it argued that it needs some alternative form of trial.

So you favor the military tribunals the Bush administration has set up at Gitmo?

Not at all. They're a disaster too.

In five years, not a single person—not even a low-level al-Qaeda or Taliban criminal—has gone to trial. Only nine have even been charged. The whole process has been mired in a combination of bureaucratic bumbling and litigation.

Whose fault is this?

Largely, but not entirely, the administration's. Part of the blame has to go to the Supreme Court as well. In 2004, the Court asserted jurisdiction over Guantánamo, opening the door to litigation that has further delayed the trials. This isn't an entirely bad thing, since the pressure of litigation has made the tribunals (called "commissions") fairer. But if your chief concern is establishing a regular system by which al-Qaeda operatives can face trial, the delay has not been helpful.

To this day, it remains unclear what legal standards the courts will impose, or whether they can even consider the matter. The Supreme Court this fall agreed to do so, but Congress has moved to strip the courts of jurisdiction over such cases, and it isn't clear whether the Supreme Court will have to stand down. So it's still not certain when any trials will actually happen, or even whether the current rules are lawful.

What is the administration doing with such people now?

Cold storage. There are hundreds at Guantánamo and an unspecified number at secret CIA facilities. This latter group includes the most important al-Qaeda people: September 11 masterminds Ramzi bin al Shibh and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, for example. They have effectively been "disappeared." This solves a short-term problem: it makes them available for interrogation. But it also creates huge problems for America's public image and creates friction with allies as well. In the long term, it's not a viable strategy.

But aren't "secret prisons" exactly what the administration wanted?

In the short run, yes. But many people within the administration under-

stand that it's critically important to put terrorists on trial eventually. Yet the commissions so far have failed.

A big part of the argument for them was efficiency. As then White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales put it shortly after the onset of the war, such commissions "can dispense justice swiftly, close to where our forces may be fighting, without years of pre-trial proceedings or post-trial appeals." Commissions would strip defendants of certain rights that can bog down proceedings in federal court, or even make them impossible in national-security cases. Defendants would have less right to confront evidence against them, making it easier for prosecutors to handle classified material or shield witnesses held in secret detention. Defendants could be excluded from certain proceedings. And the standard for admissibility of evidence would be lower, so that hearsay evidence and material collected in the rough and tumble of a shooting war might be considered.

This makes sense in theory: you don't want a trial hamstrung, or a conviction blocked, because the government cannot establish the precise chain of custody of a computer disk picked up during a military raid in Kandahar or because a confession took place under circumstances that would not be appropriate for an American service member accused of a routine crime. Yet five years and endless pretrial litigation later, thousands of miles from Afghanistan, the commissions' vaunted efficiency has turned out to be a myth.

So what went wrong?

The Pentagon tried to put together an entirely new legal system from scratch, with all the delays and difficulties that entails. It has not used military commissions since the World War II era, and those it employed then were so unfair by modern legal standards that the Bush administration was

unwilling to revive them. Instead, the military has created brand-new procedures, offices, and rules, all of which its personnel are unfamiliar with, and the very existence of which is subject to legal challenge.

The irony is that the Bushies' proposed solution—the commissions—was more fix than was really needed. Courts-martial, the system by which the military conducts trials for its own personnel, were available—and would have been a far better option.



Wouldn't courts-martial have had some of the same problems that the civilian justice system has shown in the Moussaoui case?

Potentially, yes. Over the past few decades, military trials have come to provide extensive procedural protections for the accused. Defendants have more or less the same rights to confront evidence and witnesses as they do in federal court, and the standards of admissibility are similar.

The difference is that Congress could have easily modified the court-martial for terrorism trials to address these problems. Such modifications would have been uncomfortable from a civil-liberties point of view. But given the fact that aliens abroad have limited or no constitutional rights, a kind of "court-martial lite" would almost certainly have passed constitutional muster.

Instead of coping with an entirely new and unfamiliar justice system, the military could be using a system it employs every day, with adjustments that would come into play only in certain cases.

Why has the administration insisted so tenaciously on commissions instead?

Partly to establish an ideological point: al-Qaeda people aren't entitled to trial by court-martial, the criminal process used for honorable soldiers. International law guarantees this privilege to prisoners of war. But unlawful combatants—fighters who don't conduct themselves according to the laws of war—are entitled only to trial by commission, the administration argues, so that's all they're going to get. The goal seems as much to re-establish the legitimacy of trial by military commission as to ensure that a working justice system exists for al-Qaeda operatives.

What should happen next?

Ideally, the administration would go to Congress and get the system fixed, scrapping the commissions and authorizing courts-martial lite. Alas, that is not going to happen anytime soon. The administration is too bullheaded and unilateralist, Congress too timid.

Failing a serious legislative intervention, there is no alternative to the Guantánamo trials—especially if we want to start moving detainees out of cold storage. The rules still have problems. But they are not so flawed that a fair trial is impossible or even, in the average case, unlikely. One way or another, the judgments of the commissions will receive judicial scrutiny, thereby deterring gross unfairness.

At this point, it is more critical to establish a stable, predictable means of trying these people than a perfect one. Someday, we're going to catch Osama bin Laden. It would be nice to have some idea of what comes next. ▀

Benjamin Wittes is an editorial writer at The Washington Post.

Dangerous Games

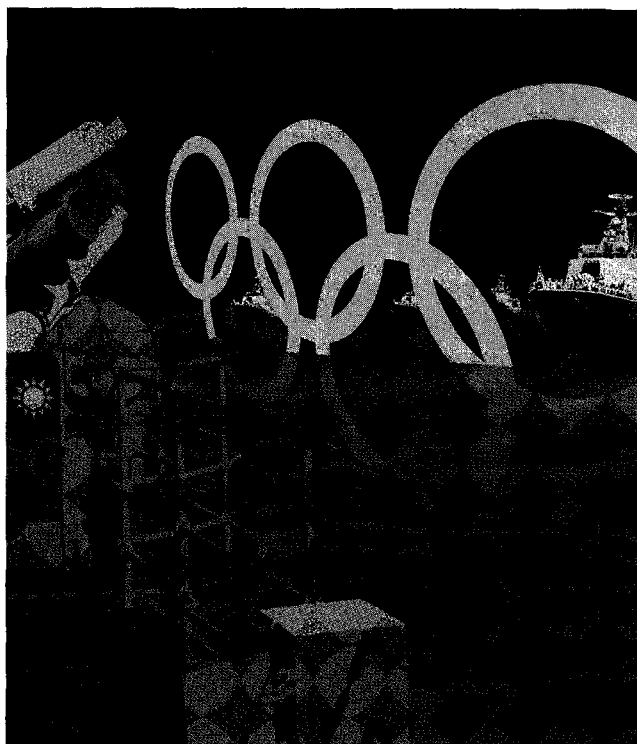
The most heated competition in the 2008 Olympics could take place not in a stadium but in the Taiwan Strait

BY JENNIFER LIND

Since the ancient competitions at Olympia, the Olympic Games have transcended national rivalries and celebrated universal human achievement. Yet throughout modern history the Olympics have also been mired in power politics, international tension, and even violence. In the games following both world wars the defeated nations were prohibited from competing. Nazi Germany used the 1936 games in Berlin to showcase its dramatic resurgence and to intimidate its neighbors with images of German power and unity. South Africa was banned from the games from 1964 to 1992 because of its apartheid laws. And in 1972 the Olympics became a battlefield in the Arab-Israeli conflict when Palestinian terrorists killed eleven Israeli athletes in a hostage crisis. Politics saturated the Olympics throughout the Cold War: the United States led a boycott of the 1980 Moscow games to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Soviets organized a retaliatory boycott of the Los Angeles games four years later.

The 2008 Olympics, the first ever to be held in China, will be a similar exercise in politics by other means, starting with a battle for prestige: after the Americans dominated at the Athens games in 2004, China and Russia agreed to cooperate to best America in Beijing. The official Chinese goal is to win 110 medals—seven more than the United States won in Athens. To this end China and Russia will exchange coaches and share training methods

and facilities. (Chinese Olympic organizers have promised that in return for Moscow's assistance they will instruct Chinese fans to cheer for Russian athletes at any event in which no Chinese athlete is competing.) In 2004 China's sports minister, Yuan Weimin, told U.S.



Olympic Committee Chairman Peter Ueberroth before the Athens games, "Don't worry—we will not topple you. But we are making this effort."

What may turn out to be of far greater concern than medal counts, however, is the possibility of war—specifically, between China and Taiwan. Why? Because Taiwanese leaders may gamble that the 2008 Olympics will provide them with their best chance to declare formal independence from the mainland. With the world's spotlight trained on Beijing, they may reason, China might not attack, as it has vowed to do in the event of such

a declaration. After all, military conflict would jeopardize the games and create an international embarrassment for China. Moreover, it would drive investors away and possibly lead to economic sanctions that would damage China's flourishing economy. The danger, of course, is that Taiwan will act and Beijing will carry out its threat despite the costs.

The 2008 Olympics will not be the first to highlight the rivalry between Taiwan and China. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, in 1949, the International Olympic Committee authorized Taiwan's Olympic committee to represent China—meaning that "Chinese" athletes were actually Taiwanese. When the PRC gained the Chinese seat at the United Nations, in 1971, the IOC subsequently recognized Beijing's Olympic committee; since then athletes from mainland China have represented the nation at the Olympics. (The IOC later worked out a deal with Taipei that allowed Taiwanese athletes to compete, but only as part of the "Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee." The team is prohibited from using its national symbols;

its athletes don't carry Taiwan's flag or hear their national anthem when they win medals.)

Taiwan nationalists recognize that the Chinese have a lot at stake in the games. Just as Japan and South Korea (hosts in 1964 and 1988, respectively) viewed their Olympics as emblematic of their national achievement, so Beijing sees the 2008 games as an opportunity to demonstrate that it has moved emphatically beyond developing-country status into the ranks of the world's greatest nations. China's aggressive quest for a higher medal total reveals how much importance the country puts on the

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Olympics. (Taipei, meanwhile, is considering the idea of hosting a future Olympics. Premier Frank Hsieh has proposed a campaign to host the 2020 games, arguing that it would boost global recognition of Taiwan. Advocates also argue that hosting the Olympics would bolster Taiwanese security, because Beijing would not dare attack the island in the preceding years.)

All this helps explain why Taiwanese nationalists—including both President Chen Shui-bian and former President Lee Teng-hui—might see the Beijing games as an opportunity. But would they really be so bold (some would say foolhardy) as to declare independence? And are they right to think that China would refrain from attack? The most likely answers to those questions are “maybe” and “no,” respectively—which raises the discomfiting prospect that unless cooler heads in Taiwan can prevail, China and Taiwan may be headed for a cross-strait war.

Would the Taiwanese declare independence under cover of the Beijing Olympics? Would China refrain from attack? The most likely answers are “maybe” and “no.”

From Taiwan’s perspective, the approach of the Beijing Olympics coincides with the closing of other windows of opportunity for independence. President Chen’s term ends in 2008; thus he may be tempted to move toward sovereignty before a more conservative government—one favoring reunification with the mainland—can take office. (Taiwanese leaders may also suppose that a bid for independence would be more propitiously launched while George W. Bush is still in office, since his administration—despite its recent rebukes of Taipei—is known to be both hawkish on foreign policy and committed to the defense and spread of democracy.)

Additionally, the changing military balance in the region does not favor Taiwan. Currently Taiwan’s military defenses are strong. It has formidable maritime power with which to repel

a Chinese invasion or thwart a naval blockade. But Chinese military modernization increasingly threatens to shift the balance of power toward Beijing. Better to strike now, independence advocates may argue, under cover of the Olympics and before Taiwan’s strategic advantage erodes further.

Moreover, in the larger scheme of things the other prospects for Taiwanese independence do not seem very good. President Chen and his Democratic People’s Party (DPP) obviously face constraints from all sides. The United States has warned Taiwan that an outright declaration of independence would reduce the likelihood of American military support. A majority of the Taiwanese people oppose any provocation that could lead to war. Most say they prefer the status quo; typically fewer than 30 percent say they want independence from the mainland. Thus committed Taiwanese nationalists may seize on the Beijing Olym-

pics as a seductive opportunity. In this scenario Taipei would begin to move toward independence this year or next, calculating that Beijing would be compelled to restrain itself until after the Olympics and hoping that China and the rest of the world would meanwhile come to accept the new status quo.

The world would probably view a sudden and overt Taiwanese declaration of independence as reckless and provocative. A subtler approach, such as scheduling a national referendum on independence, would be viewed much more sympathetically worldwide, but it might also provoke a Chinese military response (as Beijing has threatened). Both China and the United States have sharply criticized the DPP for trying to establish the referendum as a political instrument in Taiwanese politics—as President Chen tried to do in March

of 2004, when he called for a referendum on bolstering defenses against Chinese missiles and on pursuing talks with the mainland.

Beijing has explicitly warned Taipei against any Olympics opportunism. Former Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan has speculated that President Chen “might try some adventure” in the years before 2008. The deputy director of the PRC’s Taiwan Affairs Office, Wang Zaixi, said, “It is extremely dangerous for the Taiwan authorities to miscalculate the situation that the motherland would tolerate ‘Taiwan independence’ in consideration of economic development and the hosting of the Beijing Olympics.” Another official in the Taiwan Affairs Office has said that China “will safeguard our sovereignty and territorial integrity at any cost”—including the loss of the Olympic Games. Writing in a Chinese magazine, Major General Peng Guangqian cautioned that even if the Olympics were at stake, territorial sovereignty “always takes” first place. Beijing is also invoking Olympic symbolism to reassert its sovereignty over Taiwan. When describing the route that the Olympic torch would travel through China, Liu Qi, the president of the organizing committee, said that it “should cover as much ground as possible, including all provinces, regions, and”—pointedly—“Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.” Taiwan’s Premier Hsieh has rejected Beijing’s proposed route, arguing that Taiwan and China are two different countries.

In the face of such martial declarations by the Chinese and warnings from the United States, Taiwanese leaders may decide that the prudent course is to do nothing. But the Olympics do seem to present independence advocates with an opportunity that, however dangerous, may prove to be their best. In which case the most heated competition of 2008 could take place not in a Beijing stadium but in the Taiwan Strait. ■

Jennifer Lind is a research fellow at the Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics, at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Schools for Scandal

Republicans might—or might not—want to look backward for lessons on handling life under a cloud

BY JOSHUA GREEN

Legend has it that certain Eskimo tribes in northern Canada had a fiercely efficient way to dispatch elders who outlived their usefulness and became a burden on the community: put them on an ice floe and shove them off to sea. That kind of cold-eyed realism is hardly alien to the tribes of Washington, D.C., forever locked in their own struggle for survival. And if the Republican scandals centered upon the former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay and the lobbyist Jack Abramoff suddenly metastasize this spring, as appears likely, Republicans may find themselves looking wistfully northward. After all, it's an election year.

What worries Republicans is that DeLay and Abramoff are both, in their way, central figures in the party—and thus poised to taint the rest. More than anyone else now in Congress, DeLay is responsible for the GOP's majority. He built it through aggressive fundraising and an autocratic style, winning tremendous power but also a reputation for sleazy excess, which was capped last year when a Texas prosecutor indicted him for money launder-

ing. Abramoff did his part for the GOP from outside Congress, lavishing campaign money and perks on lawmakers (including DeLay) in exchange for access and favors, until he and a partner were discovered to have bilked Indian casino clients out of \$82 million.

Forecasting the effect of a brewing political storm is not unlike predicting the path of a hurricane—at best it's an educated guess. But those whose business it is to try believe the damage from this one will be significant. According to a study by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, Abramoff and his major clients contributed money to 210 members of Congress. And the plea deals prosecutors recently cut with Abramoff and an associate could soon implicate many of them, forcing what already was a large scandal into one of historical proportions.

Despite recent advances in campaign and election strategies, political professionals have never really developed a science of dealing with scandal.



When Washingtonians feel helpless, they tend to let historical analogy be their guide. The range of past scandals is practically limitless, but two now stand out by virtue of being Republican difficulties that dominated an election year: Watergate, of course, and Teapot Dome, which held the same psychic significance until Watergate eclipsed it a half-century later. The two episodes are illuminating because the party's leadership approached them differently—with starkly different results.

After Watergate drove Richard Nixon from office, in 1974, Gerald Ford faced the unenviable task of leading his party in the elections three months hence. There can be little doubt that Watergate would have cost the Republicans at the polls regardless of what Ford did in the interim. But he still faced the fraught question of whether to pardon Nixon. Just a month into his term—two months before the election—Ford granted amnesty to his

THE STATES

THE SIX-YEAR ITCH

The modern Republican Party has for years boasted of being a "big tent," sheltering everyone from Nelson Rockefeller to Pat Buchanan. But the party's most grizzled veterans privately admit that it's been stitched together as much by accidents of history as by ideological cohesion: the Cold War and resulting anti-Communism in the 1960s and 1970s, the magnetic personality of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, the dubious morality of Bill Clinton in the 1990s. Most recently, as veteran Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio has said, "Sep-

tember eleventh and the war on terror glued the coalition together."

But as discontent with the Iraq war rises and the Republican base begins to question some of the tactics being used in the fight against terrorism, that glue is dissolving, and the party risks breaking into many factions: social conservatives, moral conservatives, economic populists, economic supply-siders, deficit hawks, isolationists and realists, neoconservatives, libertarians. Diverging opinions within the party about the appropriate size of government only magnify that risk.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the party controlling the White House in the sixth year of a presidency

has almost always suffered electoral losses—a phenomenon the political theorist Kevin Phillips has described as the "six-year itch." As the Bush presidency enters its sixth year, Republicans in Washington suffer from leadership vacuums (see the House Republicans), scandal (see Duke Cunningham and Tom DeLay), rancorous ideological spats (see the failed Harriet Miers Supreme Court nomination), and simple voter fatigue.

Politics is famously local—especially in a non-presidential-election year. But this year, Republicans at the state level appear beset by infighting and logistical problems that mirror the ones in Washington. By our count, nine state Repub-

disgraced predecessor without extracting so much as a word of contrition.

Pardoning Nixon may have been the right thing to do for the country, as Ford claimed. But failing to hold him accountable carried a clear political cost: Ford's approval rating dropped from 71 percent to 50 percent practically overnight. Two months later Republicans lost forty-eight seats in the House of Representatives and four in the Senate. The hangover from the pardon continued to weigh on Ford's presidency and undoubtedly contributed to his defeat two years later.

It was a different story after the Teapot Dome affair, which came to prominence in 1923 during the presidency of Warren Harding. Much like the Abramoff scandal, this one was revealed in the course of a congressional investigation, when it came to light that Harding's Interior secretary, Albert Fall, had surreptitiously leased drilling rights to emergency naval oil reserves in Teapot Dome, Wyoming, and elsewhere to the Mammoth Oil Company (actual name!) and another in exchange for \$400,000 in bribes and payoffs. Harding himself managed to escape most of the uproar by dying later that year, sparing his successor, Calvin Coolidge, any agony over the question of a pardon. But Coolidge faced a plight no less daunting than Ford's: he faced his own election the very next year. Hardly renowned for bold action, Coolidge thunderingly denounced the scandal, well in advance

of the election. "I feel the public is entitled to know that in the conduct of such actions no one is shielded for any party, political, or other reasons," he declared. "If there has been any crime it must be prosecuted . . . If there is any guilt it will be punished; if there is any civil liability it will be enforced; if there is any fraud it will be revealed." Then he appointed two independent counsels, undermining his Democratic opponents.

The investigation played out across the next year, ultimately claiming the secretary of the Navy and the attorney general, in addition to the wretched Fall, who became the first Cabinet member ever jailed for misconduct while in office. By standard political mortality charts, Coolidge's prognosis was close to terminal. Yet his forthrightness not only saved his own political life but spared his party as well. Voters returned him to office in a landslide, and Republicans gained seats in the House and Senate. "Coolidge proved that the party responsible for a scandal can renounce the scandal, turn on those who perpetrated it, and still win an election," says Larry Sabato, the director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics and an expert on political scandals.

What Coolidge recognized was that the public demands accountability, starting at the top—an obvious proposition, it might seem, but one that eluded Ford and has so far eluded Bush.

Whether or not a president is responsible for a scandal (neither Coolidge nor Ford was responsible for his), it is he who sets his party's moral tone—and with the Bush administration already hit by one indictment (former vice-presidential Chief of Staff I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby) in the ongoing CIA leak scandal, the president is not untarnished. Coolidge carried out his vow to root out and punish those responsible for Teapot Dome and was duly rewarded, though he caught a break in that the man ultimately responsible to voters was dead. DeLay, Abramoff, et al. are, inconveniently, not dead, and in fact DeLay continues to noisily profess his innocence through very expensive attorneys, which has done little to tamp down the public's disgust. Bush hasn't distinguished himself here either, voicing support for DeLay long after it became clear that DeLay was doomed.

So will Bush be Ford or Coolidge? Not the kind of comparison presidents fantasize about, surely, but in the current situation an apt one (some would say *very* apt). Bush's indulgence of DeLay and—more important—his silence and stasis on the growing number of scandals besetting his party have left the unindicted Republicans in a very tough spot. If he does not change course soon voters, like Eskimos, are liable to give Republicans the cold shoulder on Election Day. ▀

Joshua Green is a senior editor of The Atlantic.

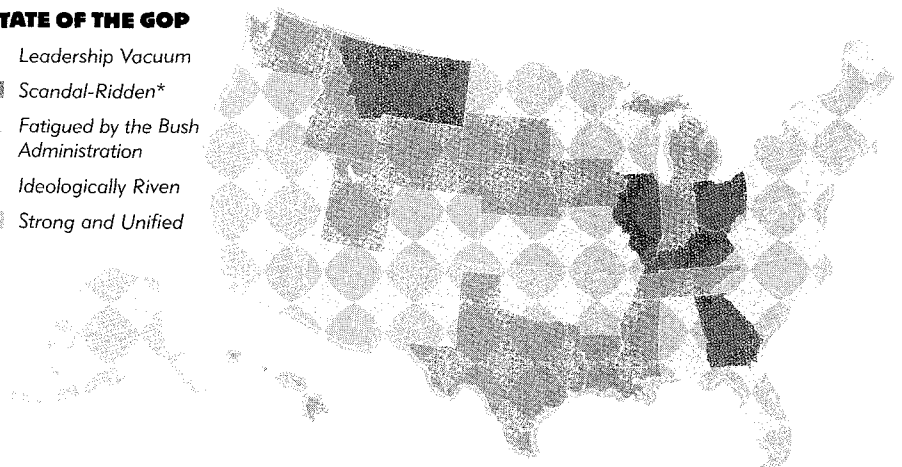
lican parties have leadership vacuums, five are mired in scandal, nine are in the throes of ideological clashes, and thirteen have fallen victim to Republican fatigue (from base supporters tiring of Bush's leadership to swing voters questioning the merits of GOP dominance). Several of these newly fragile Republican machines—Ohio's and Florida's especially—will bear watching not just this year, but in the run-up to 2008.

Of course, as measured by political time, 2008 is still epochs away. And another accident of history may yet keep this Republican coalition from disintegration: her name is Hillary Clinton.

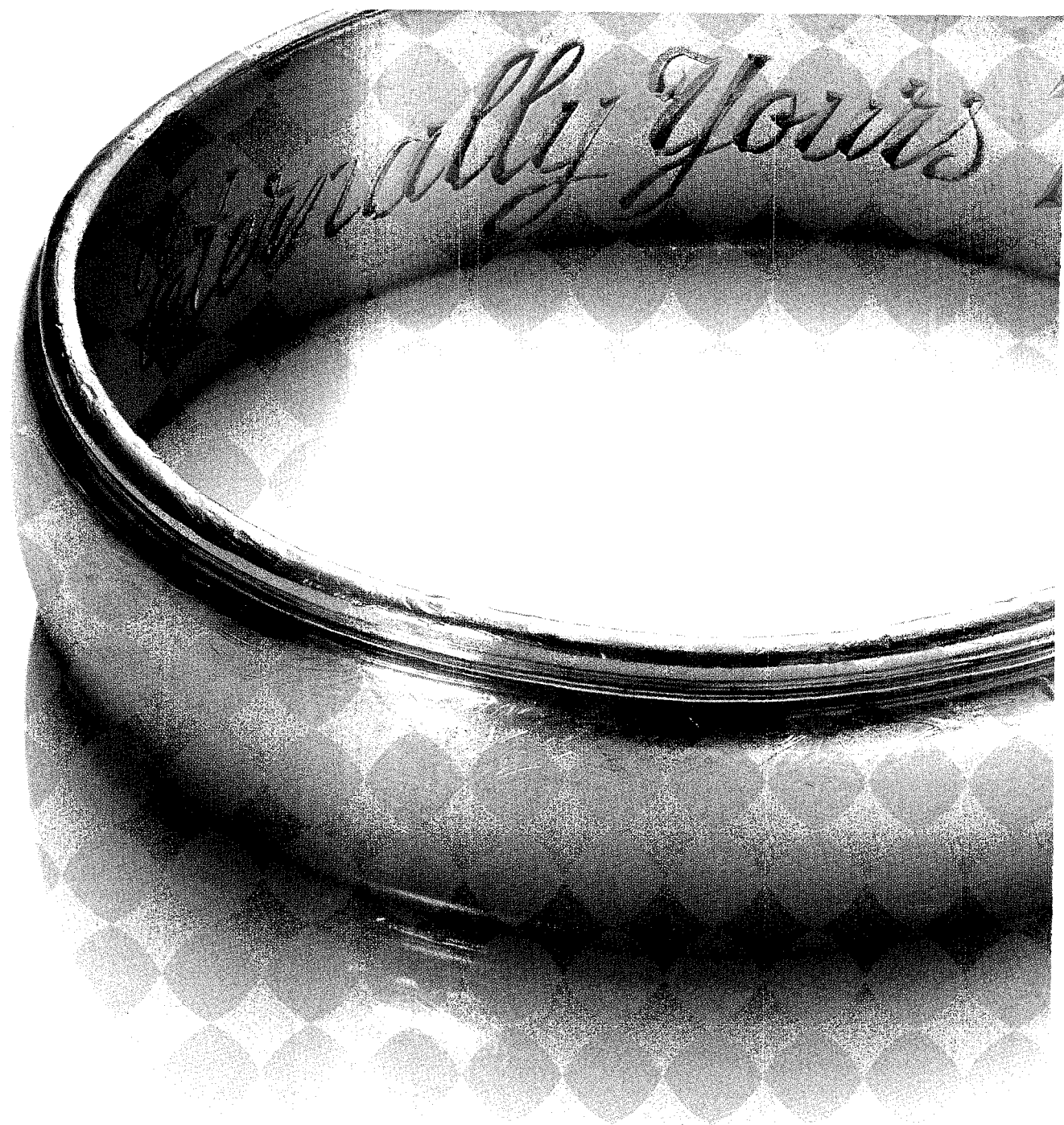
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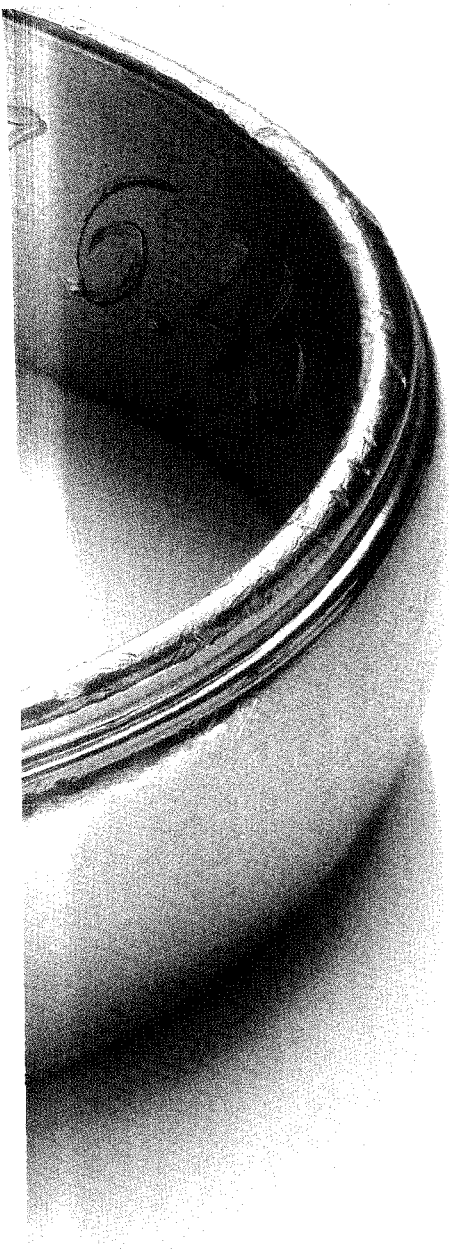
STATE OF THE GOP

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- Scandal-Ridden*
- Fatigued by the Bush Administration
- Ideologically Riven
- Strong and Unified



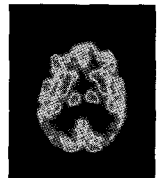
*Georgia is listed as scandal-ridden on the assumption that Ralph Reed's ties to Jack Abramoff will likely become an anchor on state Republicans.





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Capitalism: The Movie

Why Americans don't value markets enough—and why that matters

BY CLIVE CROOK

Capitalism is not much loved, even in the parts of the world it has served best. If only one country were to dote on free enterprise, America surely ought to be it. With world-beating companies, breast-beating CEOs, a timid political Left, dwindling and unpopular labor unions, and extreme prosperity (by international standards), one might expect the prevailing climate of opinion to be ardently pro-capitalist. But no. American enterprise has its spokesmen, brasher than most, just as it has its critics, as fierce as any. In the main, however, when intelligent Americans with no axes to grind contemplate the market economy, they are neither angry nor adoring, just wary and distrustful. It was ever thus.

Seen a movie lately? Watched television or read a newspaper? The culture that speaks to Americans, and hence to the Western world, radiates suspicion of free enterprise—cordial and restrained, as a rule, but dubious nonetheless. Yes, the system does work, says this culture, and there appears to be no alternative. But what a shame this is, it continues, because capitalism rewards our worst and most selfish instincts. “Greed is good” may stock the shelves, but is somewhat less than inspiring.

Popular culture understands that the market economy creates material prosperity, albeit for some more than others. It seeks out and worships business celebrities. But at the same time it sees the system as spiritually—and politically—corrupting. As viewed from Hollywood, workers are usually downtrodden, bosses are usually grasping, consumers are usually gulled, and shadowy global finance is *always* calling the geopolitical shots. We manage to prosper, most of us, but this system of ours is not very noble.

What is most striking, so far as the movies’ treatment of capitalism goes, is not the hostility of films whose main purpose is actually to indict corporate wickedness (*Wall Street*, *Erin Brockovich*, *A Civil Action*, *The Insider*, *The Constant Gardener*, and so forth). It is the idea of routine, reckless corporate immorality—maintained as though this premise were inoffensive, uncontroversial, and hardly worthy of comment—that drives movies whose principal interest lies elsewhere, whether in the human drama of contemporary geopolitics (*Syriana*, to cite a recent instance), knockabout comedy (*Fun with Dick & Jane*), children’s fantasy (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), star-crossed romance (*In Good Company*), or, classically, in some dystopian near or distant future (*Alien*, *The Terminator*, *Blade Runner*, *Robocop*, and many others).

The point is not that such movies, or the culture more generally, argue that capitalism is evil. Just the opposite:



it is that they so often merely *assume*, innocently and expecting to arouse no skepticism, that capitalism is evil.

In this, of course, the culture is not really driving attitudes. It is expressing widely held (though not very closely examined) beliefs; it is itself responding to demand. And disenchantment with commerce goes back an awfully long way. Samuel Johnson was already confronting an age-old tradition 250 years ago when he said, “There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money.” So was Adam Smith, shortly after, when he wrote, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.” Smith was not praising selfishness, by the way; he did not believe that greed is good. He was explaining how commerce can spontaneously harness a base worldly instinct to an enlightened social purpose—an idea that people, one Industrial Revolution later, still find implausible.

Capitalism is prey to excesses, self-evidently, and it creates, or leaves unintended, a host of problems that decent societies must address by other means. Even so, the prevailing culture of suspicion and disappointment is at odds with the facts. Mainly, what is missing is awe. Premodern scholars (Karl Marx is an exception) could scarcely have imagined the material advance that capitalism has delivered. Certainly Adam Smith never dreamed that his “invisible hand” would arrange things so well.

In the late 1980s, as Mikhail Gorbachev embarked on his perestroika program of economic reform, Soviet officials were sent abroad to see how things were done in the West. One visited London’s main vegetable market. He asked how the market was organized, and how prices were set. He was told that the individual traders bought whatever quantities they wished, and set their own prices, and that these fluctuated throughout the day as the balance of supply and demand changed. At

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this, the Soviet visitor laughed. He said he understood that this was the official line—but, please, how did the market really set prices?

That, in fact, was the reaction of an intelligent man. It is fantastically improbable that markets work, at scale, as well as they do. It is astonishing that in an economy of America's size—to say nothing of the world economy as a whole—a limitless variety of goods and services is continuously offered at prices people are willing to pay, without persistent gluts or shortages, entirely without central direction. That the system also calls forth an endless flow of innovation and improvement is a miracle. The man from Moscow was right to be incredulous.

And it gets better, because this infinitely complicated, decentralized system has an obvious affinity with personal liberty, in a way that a centrally directed system never could. Market exchange, after all, is voluntary; under central planning, you are told what to do—or else. Europe's newcomers from the former Soviet empire need no reminding of this. But people in Western Europe and the United States, who never had to endure the alternative to a market economy, see little or no force in the connection between economic and political liberty. Often it seems that those in the West who are most concerned with defending political or civil freedoms are least concerned with the economic kind, even to the point of being outright opposed to them. They argue as though political freedom is the real thing, whereas economic freedom is merely a cloak for injustice. In the end, as socialism in practice showed, the two are indivisible.

But does it matter, really, if people are less comfortable with the idea of capitalism than they might be, or should be? Up to a point, to be sure, this skepticism serves a purpose, drawing attention to ills and injustices that might otherwise be ignored. But there is a cost: the mood of discomfort and suspicion is a pity in itself, to the extent that it is unwarranted. Also, it fosters a demand for, or tolerance of, frivolous or wasteful interventions by government.

In comparison with other rich countries, America tends to think of itself as lightly taxed and lightly regulated. This is an illusion. Taxes in America are admittedly lower than in most of Europe—though this is partly because the Bush administration is borrowing so much (a state of affairs that cannot last), and partly because the United States, unlike almost every other rich country, has not fully socialized its health-care system. Even making no allowance for health expenditures, the government currently absorbs about as much of the national income (37 percent) as in Australia (36 percent), Canada (40 percent), Ireland (36 percent), Japan (37 percent), Spain (39 percent), and Switzerland (37 percent), and none of these is regarded as a champion of free-market economics. America regulates its labor market more lightly than Europe, hence its low rate of unemployment; but in many other areas, espe-

Unfortunately, in most cases, communicating a sense of wonder is not among their gifts. In some ways, teachers of economics are probably making matters worse. As practiced in universities, economics continues to turn inward, with ever more emphasis on math, quantitative methods, and narrow specialization. You can make a case for that, but it silences the discipline on the thing that matters most. Also, people are suspicious of economists: they see them as agents of a suspicious doctrine. And it so happens that a variety of studies have shown, notoriously, that training in economics inclines people to be more "rational"—that is, more selfish and less inclined to cooperate. This does not commend economics to the rest of us.

Corporate leaders and right-of-center politicians who set up as spokesmen for free enterprise are worse. They speak of capitalism's virtues, then get down to the real business of subsidies,

The problem is not that movies, or the popular culture generally, argue that capitalism is evil. It's that they merely assume it, seeing the market economy as spiritually—and politically—corrupting.

cially so far as risk, product safety, and the environment are concerned, America's economy is at least as heavily regulated as those in Europe.

Whether any particular spending program or regulatory intervention makes sense must be judged case by case. One could point to wasteful and unjust interventions (farm subsidies, for instance) or make a solid case for new ones (a gas tax to curb demand for oil, for example). But if a democratic country is to think these things through, it should do so with a mature understanding of the material and nonmaterial advantages of the market system. A background presumption against market forces is a poor basis for policy.

It is difficult to see where any heightened appreciation of the market system is going to come from. Economists, presumably, ought to be supplying it.

import protection, tax relief, and other favors. People see through it, and find their prejudices confirmed. The conflation of the interests of business with the interests of the nation is virtually an organizing principle of the Right. Yet in reality those interests are usually opposed—as Adam Smith again pointed out. What best serves a nation's economic interests is competition—it's why markets work, when they do. But competition hurts individual businesses, and most CEOs hate it. Don't look there for intellectual enlightenment.

How about a movie in which a firm prospers under threat of competition by selling things that people want at an affordable price, paying its workers the market wage, and breaking no laws, thereby advancing the common good? Well, you see the problem. ■

Clive Crook is a senior editor of The Atlantic.

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Primary Sources

Keeping tabs on the war on terror; bigger, brainier downtowns; synonyms make you stupid

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Year of Living Dangerously

What's remarkable these days about Lebanon isn't (for a change) turmoil, according to a report from the International Crisis Group—it's that the country has held together after a series of shocks that began in February of last year with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. That incident was followed by mass protests, the withdrawal of Syrian troops, new elections and a new government, and explosive allegations that Syrian officials were involved in plotting the killing. The authors argue that Lebanon's relative stability is largely due to memories of the recent civil war, and they warn that deepening divisions threaten the fragile peace. Outside states, they caution, should be mindful of Lebanon's history as an "arena for proxy struggles" and avoid heavy-handed intervention, focusing instead on helping the new government achieve reform. In particular, Israel and Syria need to be discouraged from meddling in their neighbor's internal affairs, and the United States should resist the temptation to force a showdown with either Damascus or Hezbollah—Lebanon's "best organized movement and de facto 'king-maker.'"

—"Lebanon: Managing the Gathering Storm," International Crisis Group

SECURITY

Risk Management

The next time the Bush administration feels the urge to trumpet the capture or death of a "high-ranking" al-Qaeda operative, it might consider a new Congressional Research Service report on measuring effectiveness in the war on terror. The report warns against an "over-reliance on quantitative indicators," arguing that such figures as body counts

and dollars spent on homeland security may bear little relation to how safe we actually are. Even if the United States eliminated "2/3 of the senior leadership" of a terrorist organization, the group might expand or decentralize, becoming "a more resilient adversary." The most important measurement isn't what we have done to terrorists but what they can do to us—and especially how close they are to making a "quantum jump" in capabilities. (The most obvious such jump, of course, would be the acquisition of WMDs.) The report lists possible indications of an imminent jump, including

the ability to attract recruits, good intelligence and access to critical technologies, and alliances with other groups. And it warns that because "progress may be defined differently by the terrorists and those who oppose them ... both can claim progress, and both can be correct."

—"Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness," Raphael Perl, Congressional Research Service

EDUCATION

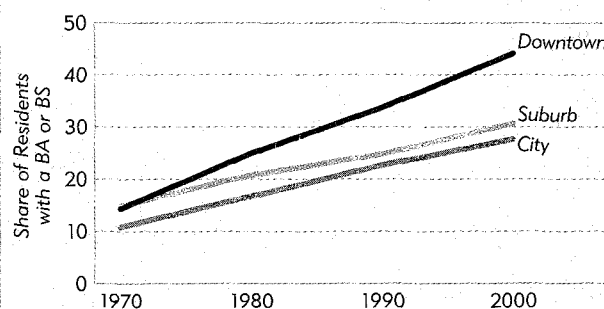
Strunk and White's Revenge

Insecure writers tend to reach for the thesaurus, often to replace a simple word with a complex one. Long-suffering English teachers have always said that this ploy never works—and now there's proof. Researchers asked seventy-one Stanford undergraduates to evaluate various writing samples; the lexicon in the samples was systematically varied, with each judge getting either a "moderately complex" or a "highly complex" version of each sample. (The researchers created the highly complex versions by replacing every noun, verb, and adjective with the longest possible synonym.) The highly complex samples may have made for muddy reading, but the effect they had on readers is clear: as complexity increased, the judges' estimation of the author's intelligence declined.

—"Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly," Daniel M. Oppenheimer, *Applied Cognitive Psychology*

For links to the documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200603/primarysources.

WHERE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREES ARE



DEMOGRAPHICS

Gentrification Nation

U.S. downtowns—roughly, the central section of a city—started regaining inhabitants only fifteen years ago, but they've been getting younger and better educated for a generation, according to a Brookings Institution study of forty-four cities. The share of downtowners with a bachelor's degree climbed from 15 to 45 percent between 1970 and 2000, and the proportion of those aged twenty-five to thirty-four rose from 13 to nearly 25 percent. Ethnic diversity and home ownership rates also increased. These trends vary wildly from city to city, however: for example, nearly 65 percent in Boston's "fully-developed downtown" boast a bachelor's degree, but in Phoenix's "slow-growing downtown" just 15 percent have one. And for every "emerging downtown" like Denver's, where the home ownership rate in 2000 was over 35 percent, there's a "declining downtown" like Cincinnati's, where only 1 percent of residents own their homes.

—"Who Lives Downtown," Eugenie L. Birch, The Brookings Institution

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Civil Rights & Black Identity

FOUR OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BLACKS IN AMERICAN HISTORY authored the Atlantic pieces that follow. Fearing that the sacrifices of the Civil War might be wasted, Frederick Douglass argued in 1866 for "a reconstruction such as will protect loyal men, black and white, in their person and property." He saw black political participation as the primary vehicle by which reconstruction could be attained and protected. Within four years of his essay's publication, black men did indeed obtain the right to vote. But in the South that right was soon subverted by fraud and violence, and within little more than a decade the brutal pigmentocracy of which he had warned had fully reemerged.

Thirty years later, Booker T. Washington articulated his optimistic—some might say naïve—belief that by dint of probity, hard work, and prosperity, blacks could persuade white society to accord them respect. He maintained that "friction between the races [would] pass away in proportion as the black man . . . can produce something that the white man wants." Yet numerous acts of anti-black mob violence stemmed from resentment against the very sort of entrepreneurialism that Washington championed.

The final two pieces have each attained iconic status. Any well-educated collegian ought to recognize W. E. B. Du Bois's famous evocation of the African-American's dual identity: "an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts; two unreconciled strivings . . ." A less familiar passage, which also warrants attention, is Du Bois's clear response to the question: What does the African-American want? "He simply wishes," Du Bois insisted, "to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development."

Finally, Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter* is twentieth-century America's most quoted and inspiring manifesto in defense of humane civil disobedience. Although it addressed most immediately the vexing problem of ends and means in the 1960s struggle for African-American liberation, King's polemic has gone on to enthral audiences around the world. Nothing better animates the idea of universal human rights than his declaration that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." —RANDALL KENNEDY

LIBERTY AND EQUALITY FOR ALL

December 1866

BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS

.....

Frederick Douglass, the prominent African-American writer, speaker, and government official, warned Congress of the potential for the de facto reenslavement of blacks in the absence of real reforms to the antebellum political system. In the essay excerpted here, Douglass exhorted Congress to pass a civil-rights amendment affirming the equality of blacks and whites in the United States.

Whether the tremendous war so heroically fought and so victoriously ended shall pass into history a miserable failure, barren of permanent results,—a scandalous and shocking waste of blood and treasure,—a strife for empire . . . or whether, on the other hand, we shall, as the rightful reward of victory over treason have a solid nation, entirely delivered from all contradictions and social antagonisms, based upon loyalty, liberty, and equality, must be determined one way or the other by the present session of Congress . . .

*This is the second in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. This installment is introduced by Randall Kennedy, the Michael R. Klein Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and the author of *Interracial Intimacies*, and *Race, Crime, and the Law*.*

The arm of the Federal government is long, but it is far too short to protect the rights of individuals in the interior of distant States. They must have the power to protect themselves, or they will go unprotected, in spite of all the laws the Federal government can put upon the national statute-book.

Slavery, like all other great systems of wrong, founded in the depths of human selfishness, and existing for ages, has not neglected its own conservation. It has steadily exerted an influence upon all around it favorable to its own continuance. And to-day it is so strong that it could exist, not only without law, but even against law. Custom, manners, morals, religion, are all on its side everywhere in the South; and when you add the ignorance and servility of the ex-slave to the intelligence and accustomed authority of the master, you have the conditions, not out of which slavery will again grow, but under which it is impossible for the Federal government to wholly destroy it, unless the Federal government be armed with despotic power, to blot out State authority, and to station a Federal officer at every cross-road. This, of course, cannot be done, and ought not even if it could. The true way and the easiest way is to make our government entirely consistent with



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itself, and give to every loyal citizen the elective franchise,—a right and power which will be ever present, and will form a wall of fire for his protection.

One of the invaluable compensations of the late Rebellion is the highly instructive disclosure it made of the true source of danger to republican government. Whatever may be tolerated in monarchical and despotic governments, no republic is safe that tolerates a privileged class, or denies to any of its citizens equal rights and equal means to maintain them ...

The people [themselves] demand such a reconstruction as shall put an end to the present anarchical state of things in the late rebellious States,—where frightful murders and wholesale massacres are perpetrated in the very presence of Federal soldiers. This horrible business they require shall cease. They want a reconstruction such as will protect loyal men, black and white, in their persons and property; such a one as will cause Northern industry, Northern capital, and Northern civilization to flow into the South, and make a man from New England as much at home in Carolina as elsewhere in the Republic. No Chinese wall can now be tolerated. The South must be opened to the light of law and liberty, and this session of Congress is relied upon to accomplish this important work.

The plain, common-sense way of doing this work ... is simply to establish in the South one law, one government, one administration of justice, one condition to the exercise of the elective franchise, for men of all races and colors alike. This great measure is sought as earnestly by loyal white men as by loyal blacks, and is needed alike by both. Let sound political prescience but take the place of an unreasoning prejudice, and this will be done.

Volume 18, Number 110, pp. 761–765

SELF-RELIANCE

September 1896

BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

.....

The African-American spokesman and educator Booker T. Washington argued that black education's first priority should be to empower blacks with practical skills like those he taught at his own Tuskegee Institute. By learning to efficiently manage their own households and produce goods and services of use to the community at large, he suggested, blacks would come to be appreciated by their white neighbors as valuable fellow citizens.

Nothing else so soon brings about right relations between the two races in the South as the industrial progress of the negro. Friction between the races will pass away in proportion as the black man, by reason of his skill, intelligence, and character, can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world.

This is [a] reason why at Tuskegee we push the industrial training. We find that as every year we put into a Southern community colored men who can start a brick-yard, a sawmill, a tin-shop, or a printing-office,—men who produce something that makes the white man partly dependent upon the negro, instead of all the dependence being on the other side,—a change takes place in the relations of the races.

Let us go on for a few more years knitting our business and industrial relations into those of the white man, till a black man gets a mortgage on a white man's house that he can foreclose at will. The white man on whose house the mortgage rests will not try to prevent that negro from voting when he goes to the polls. It is through the dairy farm, the truck garden, the trades, and commercial life, largely, that the negro is to find his way to the enjoyment of all his rights. Whether he will or not, a white man respects a negro who owns a two-story brick house ...

It is well to bear in mind that slavery taught the white man that labor with the hands was something fit for the negro only, and something for the white man to come into contact with just as little as possible. It is true that there was a large class of poor white people who labored with the hands, but they did it because they were not able to secure negroes to work for them; and these poor whites were constantly trying to imitate the slave-holding class in escaping labor, and they too regarded it as anything but elevating. The negro in turn looked down upon the poor whites with a certain contempt because they had to work. The negro, it is to be borne in mind, worked under constant protest, because he felt that his labor was being unjustly required ... Labor with him was a badge of degradation ...

At Tuskegee we became convinced that the thing to do was to make a careful systematic study of the condition and needs of the South ... and to bend our efforts in the direction of meeting these needs ... After fourteen years of experience and observation, what is the result? Gradually but surely, we find that all through the South the disposition to look upon labor as a disgrace is on the wane, and the parents who themselves sought to escape work are so anxious to give their children training in intelligent labor that every institution which gives training in the handicrafts is crowded, and many (among them Tuskegee) have to refuse admission to hundreds of applicants ...

The social lines that were once sharply drawn between those who labored with the hand and those who did not are disappearing. Those who formerly sought to escape labor, now when they see that brains and skill rob labor of the toil and drudgery once associated with it, instead of trying to avoid it are willing to pay to be taught how to engage in it. The South is beginning to see labor raised up, dignified and beautified, and in this sees its salvation.

Volume 78, Number 467, pp. 322–328

THE "VEIL" OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

August 1897

BY W. E. B. DU BOIS

.....

This essay helped introduce the Harvard-educated black sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois to a national audience and went on to become the opening chapter of his classic Souls of Black Folk (1903). Du Bois argued that, given the opportunity to educate themselves, American blacks would emerge from behind what he referred to as their "veil" of self-conscious "differentness."

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word ...

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

This is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, and to husband and use his best powers.

Volume 80, Number 478, pp. 194–198

LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL

August 1963

BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

.....

King's famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," published in The Atlantic as "The Negro Is Your Brother," was written in response to a public statement of concern and caution issued by eight white religious leaders of the South. It stands as one of the classic documents of the civil-rights movement.

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all of the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would be engaged in little else in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of "outsiders coming in" ...

I am in Birmingham because injustice is here ... I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider ...

We have waited for more than three hundred and forty years for our God-given and constitutional rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say "wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she cannot go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on

television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos, "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodyness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience ...

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, it is rather strange and paradoxical to find us consciously breaking laws. One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are just laws, and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "An unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality ...

There are some instances when a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I was arrested Friday on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong with an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade, but when the ordinance is used to

preserve segregation and to deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and peaceful protest, then it becomes unjust.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was seen sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar because a higher moral law was involved. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks before submitting to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience.

We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. But I am sure that if I had lived in Germany during that time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal. If I lived in a Communist country today where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I believe I would openly advocate disobeying these anti-religious laws ...

I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are presently misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson scratched across the pages of history the majestic word of the Declaration of Independence, we were here ... If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands ...

Never before have I written a letter this long—or should I say a book? I'm afraid that it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else is there to do when you are alone for days in the dull monotony of a narrow jail cell other than write long letters, think strange thoughts, and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that is an understatement of the truth and is indicative of an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything in this letter that is an overstatement of the truth and is indicative of my having a patience that makes me patient with anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Volume 212, Number 2, pp. 78-88



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HOW DO I LOVE THEE?

A growing number of Internet dating sites are relying on academic researchers to develop a new science of attraction. A firsthand report from the front lines of an unprecedented social experiment

BY LORI GOTTLIEB

Illustrations by Dynamic Duo Studio

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I'd been sitting in Dr. Neil Clark Warren's office for less than fifteen minutes when he told me he had a guy for me. It wasn't surprising that the avuncular seventy-one-year-old founder of eHarmony.com, one of the nation's most popular online dating services, had matchmaking on his mind. The odd thing was that he was eager to hook me up without having seen my eHarmony personality profile.

I'd come to the eHarmony headquarters in Pasadena, California, in early October to learn more about the site's "scientifically proven" and patented Compatibility Matching System. Apparently, the science wasn't working for me. The day before, after I'd taken the company's exhaustive (and exhausting) 436-question personality survey, the computer informed me that of the approximately 9 million eHarmony members, more than 40 percent of whom are men, I had zero matches. Not just in my city, state, region, or country, but in the entire world. So Warren, who looks like Orville Redenbacher and speaks with the folksy cadence of Garrison Keillor, suggested setting me up with one of his company's advisory board members, whom he described as brilliant, Jewish, and thirty-eight years old. According to Warren, this board member, like me, might have trouble finding a match on eHarmony.

"Let me tell you why you're such a difficult match," Warren said, facing me on one of his bright floral sofas. He started running down the backbone of eHarmony's predictive model of broad-based compatibility, the so-called twenty-nine dimensions (things like curiosity, humor, passion, intellect), and explaining why I and my prospective match were such outliers.

"I could take the nine million people on our site and show you dimension by dimension how we'd lose people for you," he began. "Just on IQ alone—people with an IQ lower than 120, say. Okay, we've eliminated people who are not intellectually adequate. We could do the same for people who aren't creative enough, or don't have your brilliant sense of

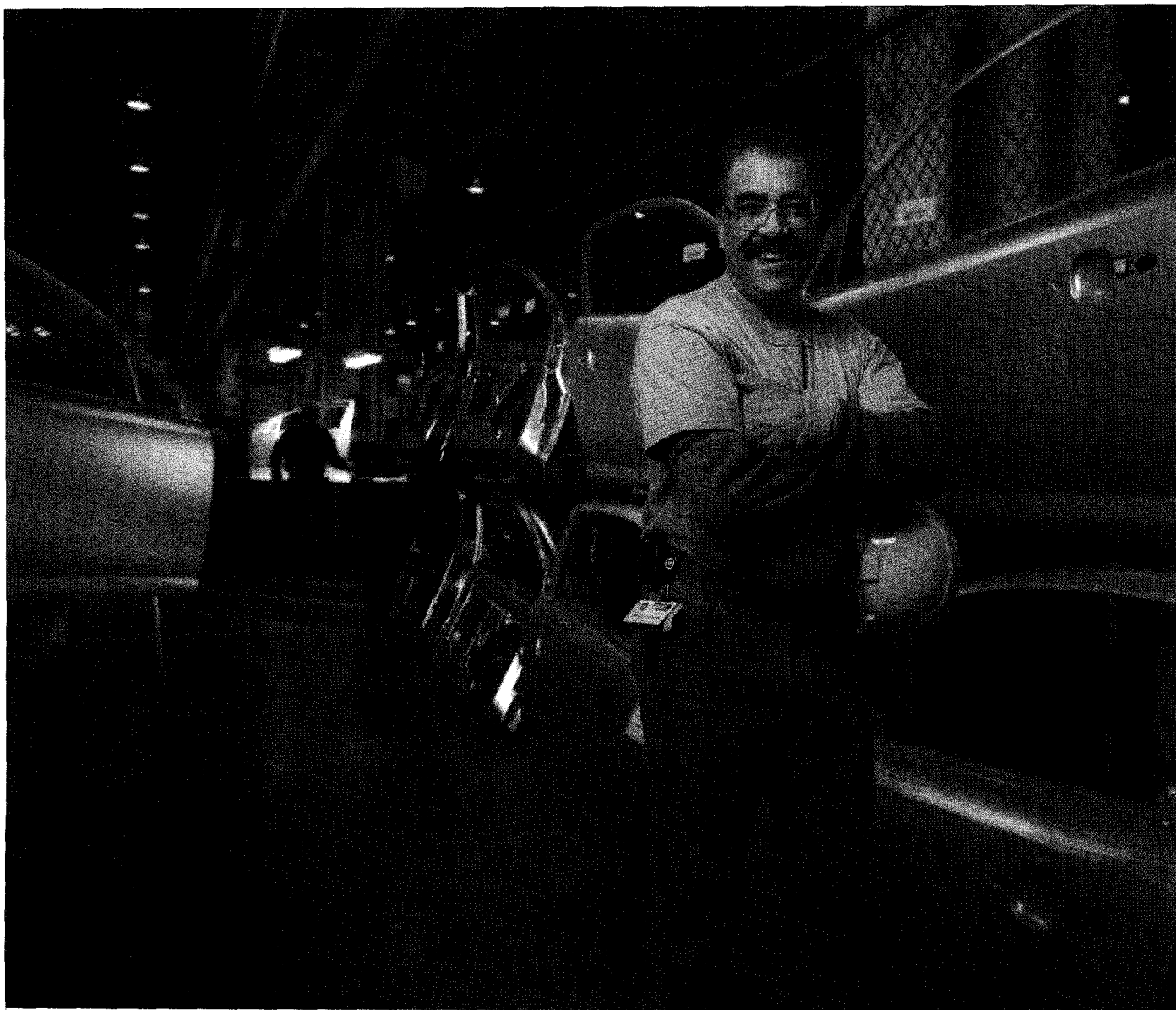
humor. See, when you get on the tails of these dimensions, it's really hard to match you. You're too bright. You're too thoughtful. The biggest thing you've got to do when you're gifted like you are is to be patient."

After the over-the-top flattery wore off—and I'll admit, it took an embarrassingly long time—I told Warren that most people I know don't join online dating sites to be patient. Impatience with real-world dating, in fact, is precisely what drives many singles to the fast-paced digital meat market. From the moment Match.com, the first such site, appeared in 1995, single people suddenly had twenty-four-hour access to thousands of other singles who met their criteria in terms of race, religion, height, weight, even eye color and drinking habits.

Nearly overnight, it seemed, dozens of similar sites emerged, and online dating became almost de rigueur for busy singles looking for love. According to a recent Pew survey, 31 percent of all American adults (63 million people) know someone who has used a dating Web site, while 26 percent (53 million people) know someone who has gone out with a person he or she met through a dating Web site. But was checking off boxes in columns of desired traits, like an à la carte Chinese take-out menu, the best way to find a soul mate?

Enter eHarmony and the new generation of dating sites, among them PerfectMatch.com and Chemistry.com. All have staked their success on the idea that long-term romantic compatibility can be predicted according to scientific principles—and that they can discover those principles and use them to help their members find lasting love. To that end they've hired high-powered academics, devised special algorithms for relationship-matching, developed sophisticated personality questionnaires, and put into place mechanisms for the long-term tracking of data. Collectively, their efforts mark the early days of a social experiment of unprecedented proportions, involving millions of couples and

Lori Gottlieb is the author of Stick Figure (2000) and a co-author of the forthcoming I Love You, Nice to Meet You.



I'm one in a million. Everyday nearly 1,000,000 Americans earn their living helping GM build and sell cars in the United States. I'm one of them. My name is James Klemann and I'm a tool maker at the GM stamping plant in Lordstown, Ohio. To me and my family, it's the most important job in the country.

James A. Klemann

Only 

possibly extending over the course of generations. The question at the heart of this grand trial is simple: In the subjective realm of love, can cold, hard science help?

Although eHarmony was the first dating site to offer science-based matching, Neil Clark Warren seems like an unlikely pioneer in the field. Even though he earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Chicago, in 1967, he never had much of a passion for academic research—or an interest in couples. “I was scared to death of adults,” he told me. “So I did child therapy for a while.” With a master’s degree in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, he went on to Fuller Theological Seminary’s Graduate School of Psychology, in southern California, where he taught and practiced humanistic psychology (what he calls “client-centered stuff”) in the vein of his University of Chicago mentor, Carl Rogers. “I hated doing research,” he admitted, before adding with a smile, “In fact, I was called ‘Dr. Warm.’”

Fittingly, it was Warren’s family, not academia, that piqued his interest in romantic compatibility. “When my daughters came along, that was a big pivot in my life in thinking about how do two people get together,” he told me. “I started reading in the literature and realizing what a big chance they had of not having a satisfying marriage. I started trying to look into it.”

Soon he began a private practice of couples therapy—with a twist. “People have always thought, wrongly, that psychotherapy is a place to go deal with problems,” he said. “So when a couple would come in, I’d say, ‘Tell me how you fell in love. Tell me the funniest thing that’s happened in your marriage.’ If you want to make a relationship work, don’t talk about what you find missing in it! Talk about what you really like about it.”

Warren is a big proponent of what he likes to call “folksy wisdom.” One look at the shelves in his office confirms this. “I’ve been reading this little book about the Muppets—you know, Jim Henson,” he said. “And I’ve been reading another book about Mister Rogers. I mean, Mister Rogers was brilliant beyond belief! He got a hold of concepts so thoroughly that he could transmit them to six-year-old kids! Do you know how much you have to get a hold of a concept to transmit it simply? His idea of simple-but-profound has had a profound influence on me.”

The basis of eHarmony’s matching system also sounds simple but profound. In successful relationships, Warren says, “similarities are like money in the bank. Differences are like debts you owe. It’s all right to have a few differences, as long as you have plenty of equity in your account.”

He leaned in and lowered his voice to a whisper. “Mister Rogers and Jim Henson,” Warren continued, “they got a hold of the deep things of life and were able to put them out there. So that’s what we want to do with our products. We want to put them out there in a way that you’d say, ‘This

is common sense. This seems right, this seems like it would work.’ Our idea of broad-based compatibility, I put it out there in front of you. Does that seem right?”

Whether or not it seems right on an intuitive level is almost beside the point. After all, eHarmony’s selling point, its very brand identity, is its scientific compatibility system. That’s where Calen Buckwalter comes in.

A vice president of research and development for the company, Buckwalter is in charge of recruiting what he hopes will be twenty to twenty-five top relationship researchers away from academia—just as he was lured away by Warren nine years ago. A former psychology graduate student at Fuller Theological Seminary (his dissertation was titled “Neuropsychological Factors Affecting Survival in Malignant Glioma Patients Treated with Autologous Stimulated Lymphocytes”), Buckwalter had become an assistant professor at the University of Southern California, where he was studying the effects of hormones on cognition, when he got the call from Warren.

“Neil knew I lived and breathed research, and he had this idea to try to develop some empirically based model to match people,” Buckwalter said when I visited him at his office at eHarmony. He wore a black T-shirt and wire-rimmed glasses, and had a hairstyle reminiscent of Einstein’s. “He wasn’t necessarily thinking, over the Internet—maybe a storefront operation like Great Expectations.” Relationships weren’t Buckwalter’s area, but he welcomed the challenge. “A problem is a problem, and relationships are a good problem,” he said. “In the research context, it’s certainly an endlessly fascinating question.”

With the help of a graduate student, Buckwalter reviewed the psychological literature to identify the areas that might

The question is simple: In the subjective realm of love, can cold, hard science help?

be relevant in predicting success in long-term relationships. “Once we identified all those areas, then we put together a questionnaire—just a massively long questionnaire,” he said. “It was probably close to a thousand questions. Because if you don’t ask it, you’re never gonna know. So we had tons of questions on ability, even more on interest. Just every type of personality aspect that was ever measured, we were measuring it all.”

Because it wasn’t practical to execute a thirty-year longitudinal study, he and Warren decided to measure existing relationships, surveying people who were already married. The idea was to look for patterns that produce satisfaction in marriages, then try to reproduce them in the matching of singles.

Buckwalter’s studies soon yielded data that confirmed one of Warren’s longtime observations: namely, that the



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members of a happy couple are far more similar to each other than are the members of an unhappy couple. Compatibility, in other words, rests on shared traits. "I can't tell you how delighted I was," Warren said, "when the factor-analytic studies started bringing back the same stuff I'd seen for years."

But could this be true across the board? I told Warren that my most successful relationships have been with men who are far less obsessive than I am. Warren assured me that's not a similarity their system matches for. "You don't want two obsessives," he explained. "They'll drive each other crazy. You don't find two control freaks in a great marriage. So we try to tweak the model for that. Fifty percent of the ball game is finding two people who are stable."

For Warren, a big question remained: What should be done with these findings? Originally, he had partnered with his son-in-law, Greg Forgatch, a former real-estate developer, to launch the business. Their first thought was to produce educational videotapes on relationship compatibility. After all, Warren had recently written his book, *Finding the Love of Your Life*.

"We tried so hard to make videotapes and audiotapes," Warren said. "I went into the studio and made lists. We came up with a hundred things singles need. But singles don't want education; they want flesh! They want a person. So that's when, in 1997, we said, 'We've gotta help people find somebody who would be good for them. Some *body*.'"

To connect singles and create a data pool for more research, the Internet seemed the best option. Based on a study of 5,000 married couples, Warren put together the compatibility model that became the basis for eHarmony. "We got encouraged by everybody, 'Get out there, get out

there! The first person to market is going to be the most successful,'" Warren recalled. But he insisted on getting the matching system right before launching the site—and that didn't happen until August of 2000, during the dot-com bust. By 2001 he was contemplating declaring bankruptcy.

"And then," Warren recalled, "we found an error in our matching formula, so a whole segment of our people were not getting matched. It was an error with all the Christian people on the site."

This is a sensitive topic for Warren, who bristles at the widely held opinion that eHarmony is a Christian dating site. The company's chief operating officer, he offered by way of rebuttal, is Jewish, and Buckwalter, who became a quadriplegic at age sixteen after jumping into a river and breaking his neck, is agnostic. And while Warren describes himself as "a passionate Christian" and proudly declares, "I love Jesus," he worried about narrowing the site with too many questions about spiritual beliefs. Which is where the error came in.

"We had seven questions on religion," he explained, "and we eliminated four of them. But we

forgot to enter that into the matching formula! These were seven-point questions. You needed twenty-eight points to get matched with a Christian person, but there was no way you could get them! We only had three questions! So every Christian person who had come to us had zero matches."

Fortunately, a wave of positive publicity, featuring married couples who'd met through eHarmony and the naturally charismatic Warren, turned things around. Still, Warren said of the innocent mistake, "you kind of wonder how many relationships fall apart for reasons like this—how many businesses?"

Today, eHarmony's business isn't just about using science to match singles online. Calling itself a "relationship-enhancement service," the company has recently created a venture-capital-funded think tank for relationship and marital research, headed up by Dr. Gian Gonzaga, a scientist from the well-known marriage-and-family lab at the University of California at Los Angeles. The effort, as Gonzaga put it to me recently, is "sort of like a Bell Labs or Microsoft for love."

An energetic, attractive thirty-five-year-old, Gonzaga thought twice about leaving the prestige of academia. "It seemed cheesy at first," he said. "I mean, this was a dating service." But after interviewing with Warren, he realized that conducting his research under the auspices of eHarmony would offer certain advantages. He'd be unfettered by teaching and grant-writing, and there would be no sitting on committees or worrying about tenure. More important, since his research would now be funded by business, he'd have the luxury of doing studies with large groups of ready

subjects over many years—but without the constraints of having to produce a specific product.

“We’re using science in an area most people think of as inherently unscientific,” Gonzaga said. So far, the data are promising: a recent Harris Interactive poll found that between September of 2004 and September of 2005, eHarmony facilitated the marriages of more than 33,000 members—an average of forty-six marriages a day. And a 2004 in-house study of nearly 300 married couples showed that people who met through eHarmony report more marital satisfaction than those who met by other means. The company is now replicating that study in a larger sample.

“We have massive amounts of data!” Warren said. “Twelve thousand new people a day taking a 436-item questionnaire! Ultimately, our dream is to have the biggest group of relationship psychologists in the country. It’s so easy to get people excited about coming here. We’ve got more data than they could collect in a thousand years.”

But how useful is this sort of data for single people like me? Despite Warren’s disclaimer about what a tough eHarmony match I am, I did finally get some profiles in my inbox. They included a bald man with a handlebar moustache, who was fourteen inches taller than me; a five-foot-four-inch attorney with no photos; and a film editor whose photo shows him wearing a kilt—and not in an ironic way. Was this the best science could do?

When I asked Galen Buckwalter about this, he laughed, indicating that he’d heard the question before. “The thing you have to remember about our system is we’re matching on these algorithms for long-term compatibility,” he said. “Long-term satisfaction is not the same as short-term attraction. A lot of people, when they see their initial matches, it’s like, ‘This is crap!’”

In ads and on his Web site, Warren talks about matching people “from the inside out.” Was eHarmony suggesting that I overlook something as basic as romantic chemistry? “When we started out,” Buckwalter said, “we were almost that naive.” But now, he added, eHarmony is conducting research on the nature of physical attraction.

“We’re trying to find out if we can predict physical chemistry with the same degree of statistical certainty that we’ve used to predict long-term satisfaction through our compatibility matching. In general, people seem to be attracted to people who share their physical attributes,” Buckwalter explained, noting that he has found some exceptions, like height preference. “There’s a lot of variability on that dimension,” he said. “A person’s height, it turns out, is not a consistent predictor of short-term attraction.” Meanwhile, Buckwalter’s team is in the process of testing new hypotheses.

“We’re still convinced that our compatibility-matching process is essential for long-term satisfaction, so we’re not



going to mess with that,” he insisted. “But if we can fit a short-term attraction model on top of that, and it’s also empirically driven, that’s the Holy Grail.”

Over at Chemistry.com, a new site launched by Match.com, short-term attraction is already built into the system. This competitor of eHarmony’s was developed with help from Match.com’s chief scientific adviser, Dr. Helen Fisher, an anthropologist at Rutgers University, whose research focuses on the brain physiology of romantic love and sexuality. Chemistry.com is currently assembling a multidisciplinary group of psychologists, relationship counselors, sociologists, neuroscientists, and sexologists to serve as consultants.

The company sought out Fisher precisely because its market research revealed that although a large segment of singles wanted a scientific approach, they didn’t want it to come at the expense of romantic chemistry. “On most of the other sites, there’s this notion of ‘fitness matching,’” Fisher said from her office in New York City. “You may have the same goals, intelligence, good looks, political beliefs. But you can walk into a room, and every one of those boys might come from the same background, have the same level of intelligence, and so on, and maybe you’ll talk to three but won’t fall in love with any of them. And with the fourth one, you do. What creates that chemistry?”

It’s a constellation of factors, Fisher told me. Sex drive, for instance, is associated with the hormone testosterone in both men and women. Romantic love is associated with elevated activity of the neurotransmitter dopamine and probably also another one, norepinephrine. And attachment

is associated with the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin. "It turns out," she said, "that seminal fluid has all of these chemicals in it. So I tell my students, 'Don't have sex if you don't want to fall in love.'"

Romantic love, Fisher maintains, is a basic mating drive—more powerful than the sex drive. "If you ask someone to go to bed with you, and they reject you," she says, "you don't kill yourself. But if you're rejected in love, you *might* kill yourself."

For Chemistry.com's matching system, Fisher translated her work with neurotransmitters and hormones into discrete personality types. "I've always been extremely impressed with Myers-Briggs," she said, referring to the personality assessment tool that classifies people according to four pairs of traits: Introversion versus Extroversion, Sensing versus Intuition, Thinking versus Feeling, and Judging versus Perceiving. "They had me pinned to the wall when I took the test, and my sister, too. So when Chemistry.com approached me, I said to myself, 'I'm an anthropologist who studies brain chemistry, what do I know about personality?'"

Turns out she knew quite a bit: Genes for the activity of dopamine are associated with motivation, curiosity, anxiety, and optimism. Genes for the metabolism of serotonin, another neurotransmitter, tend to modulate one's degree of calm, stability, popularity, and religiosity. Testosterone is associated with being rational, analytical, exacting, independent, logical, rank-oriented, competitive, irreverent, and narcissistic. And the hormone estrogen is associated with being imaginative, creative, insightful, humane, sympathetic, agreeable, flexible, and verbal.

"So I had these four sheets of paper," Fisher continued. "And I decided to give each a name. Serotonin became the Builder. Dopamine, the Explorer. Testosterone, the Director. And estrogen—I wish I'd called it the Ambassador or Diplomat, but I called it the Negotiator." Myers-Briggs, she says, "clearly knew the four types but didn't know the chemicals behind them."

The 146-item compatibility questionnaire on Chemistry.com correlates users' responses with evidence of their levels of these various chemicals. One question, for instance, offers drawings of a hand, then asks:

Which one of the following images most closely resembles your left hand?

Index finger slightly longer than ring finger

Index finger about the same length as ring finger

Index finger slightly shorter than ring finger

Index finger significantly shorter than ring finger

The relevance of this question might baffle the average online dater accustomed to responding to platitudes like, "How would you describe your perfect first date?" But Fisher explains that elevated fetal testosterone determines the ratio of the second and fourth finger in a particular way

as it simultaneously builds the male and female brain. So you can actually look at someone's hand and get a fair idea of the extent to which they are likely to be a Director type (ring finger longer than the index finger) or a Negotiator type (index finger longer or the same size).

Another question goes like this:

How often do you vividly imagine extreme life situations, such as being stranded on a desert island or winning the lottery?

Almost never

Sometimes

Most of the time

All the time

"Someone who answers 'All the time' is a definite Negotiator," Fisher said. "High estrogen activity is associated with extreme imagination."

While other sites gather data based on often unreliable self-reports ("How romantic do you consider yourself to be?"), many of the Chemistry.com questions are designed to translate visual interpretation into personality assessment, thus eliminating some of the unreliability. In one, the user is presented with a book's jacket art. We see a woman in a sexy spaghetti-strapped dress gazing at a man several feet away in the background, where he leans on a stone railing. The sky is blue, and they're overlooking an open vista. "What is the best title for this book?" the questionnaire asks, and the choices are as follows:



A Spy in Rimini

Anatomy of Friendship:

A Smart Guide for Smart People

A Scoundrel's Story

Things Left Unsaid

According to Fisher, each response is correlated with one of the four personality types: Choice A corresponds to Explorer, B to Builder, C to Director, and D to Negotiator.

Even sense of humor can be broken down by type, with questions like "Do you sometimes make faces at yourself in the mirror?" (people with a sense of humor do) and "At the zoo, which do you generally prefer to watch?" (the reply "monkeys and apes" indicates more of a funny bone than "lions and tigers"). According to Fisher, a Director likes people to laugh at his or her jokes; a Negotiator likes to be around someone funny so he or she can laugh at that person's jokes; an Explorer is spontaneous and laughs at just about anything; and a Builder, she suspects, generally isn't as funny as the others.

But how to match people up according to Fisher's four personality types, and under what circumstances, isn't so

GETTY IMAGES

straightforward. Another question, for instance, presents four smiling faces and asks:

Take a look at the faces below. Are their smiles sincere?



Fisher says that people with high levels of estrogen—usually women—have better social skills, and are better at reading other people. So users who choose the correct “real” smiles (pictures two and three) will be the Negotiators. This, Fisher says, is an area where “complementarity” might be important. The problem with sites like eHarmony, she believes, is that they place too much emphasis on similarity, whereas, in her view, falling in love depends on two elements: similarity and complementarity. “We also want someone who masks our flaws,” she explained. “For example, people with poor social skills sometimes gravitate toward people with good social skills. I’m an Explorer, so I don’t really need a partner who is socially skilled. That’s not essential to me. But it may be essential to a Director, who’s generally less socially skilled.”

Chemistry.com’s compatibility questionnaire also examines secondary personality traits. To illustrate, Fisher cited her own relationship. “I’m currently going out with a man,” she said, “and of course I made him take the test instantly. We’re both Explorers and older. I’m not sure two Explorers want to raise a baby together, because nobody will be home. But in addition, I’m a Negotiator and he’s a Director type. Our dominant personality is similar, but underneath, we’re complementary.”

Determining which works best—similarity or complementarity—may change with the circumstances. A young woman who’s an Explorer, Fisher said, might be attracted to a Builder, someone who’s more of a homebody, loyal, dependable, and protective. But the pair will be more compatible if their secondary personalities match—maybe they’re both Negotiators underneath.

“Nobody is directly locked into any one of these temperament types,” Fisher said. “That’s why we provide each person with both a major and a minor personality profile. Do Explorers go well together? Do likes attract likes? Sometimes they do and sometimes they don’t.”

If this sounds a bit, well, unscientific, Fisher is the first to admit it. “I have theories about what personality type a person would be most ideally suited with,” she told me, “but I also trust people to tell me what they are looking for. All throughout the questionnaire are checks and balances to what are just Helen Fisher’s theories.”

This is why she decided to include an item on the Chemistry.com questionnaire that asks about the traits

of a person’s partner in his or her most successful former relationship: Was that person an Explorer, a Builder, a Director, a Negotiator? “Anybody can match somebody for values. But I’m hoping to create a system so that five years later they still fascinate each other.”

At the same time, Fisher wants couples to be fascinated by each other early on. In other words, why waste time e-mailing back and forth to get to know a potential match over the course of several weeks, as eHarmony encourages its users to do, if there won’t be any chemistry when they finally meet? Chemistry.com’s guided 1-2-3-Meet system provides a step-by-step structure to get couples face to face as soon as possible for that all-important “vibe check.” Then there’s a post-meeting “chemistry check,” where each person offers feedback about the date.

The goal is to incorporate this information into the algorithm to provide better matches, but it can also serve as an accuracy check of the data. Say, for instance, that Jack describes himself as a fashionable dresser, but Jill reports that he showed up for their date in flip-flops, cut-offs, and a do-rag. If the feedback from a number of Jack’s first meetings indicates the same problem, Chemistry.com will send him an e-mail saying, “Jack, wear a pair of trousers.”

When I asked Helen Fisher how the site’s scientific algorithm might change based on this user feedback, she said that perhaps the computer could pick up cues about a person’s physical type based on the people he or she finds attractive or unattractive, then send that person closer matches. Or, it might know better than to match me—an avid reader attracted to literary types—with the guy whose personality assessment indicates a literary bent but whose essay reads as follows:

While I do read books, I have a notoriously short attention span for them. As a result, partially read copies of numerous really good (so I’m told) books are scattered around my apartment. When these get set aside, it’s because I’ve gotten sucked into magazines ... Every few days, the magazines lose out to DVDs.

It’s also possible that user feedback could change the matching formula completely. “We always look at data,” Fisher said. “If we find that Explorer/Builder to Director/Negotiator is working for more people, if we find the biochemistry is stronger, we’ll adjust that in the formula.” Fisher acknowledged that the system right now is mostly a learning tool—a way to collect large amounts of data, look for patterns, and draw conclusions based on the findings.

Still, even a thoroughly researched biochemical model won’t prevent glitches in the matching system. In Fisher’s view, for example, no scientifically based site would pair her with the men she’s dated, because, as she put it, “they’re all better-looking than me.”

“It would be preposterous for anyone to say they can create a formula that works perfectly,” she said emphatically.

"But I do believe that science can help us get close, and that there's a lot more to be learned."

This test doesn't pretend to be about chemistry," said Dr. Pepper Schwartz—who developed the Duet Total Compatibility System in conjunction with the two-year-old site PerfectMatch.com. She was speaking by cell phone from San Francisco, where she had just attended a meeting of the National Human Sexuality Resource Center, on whose board she sits. "The chemistry test at Match—that's not about chemistry either. If I could concoct a test for chemistry, I'd make a zillion dollars."

A sociologist at the University of Washington in Seattle, Schwartz is PerfectMatch.com's hipper version of Neil Clark Warren: the accessible, empathic, media-savvy love doctor who guides users through the treacherous dating trenches and onto the path of true compatibility.

According to the site—which calls her by the cutesy moniker "Dr. Pepper"—Schwartz is "the leading relationship expert in the nation," a woman who "holds the distinction of being the only relationship expert on the Web who's a published authority, as well as a professor at a major U.S. university." Oh, and then there are her appearances on *Oprah*, *The Today Show*, and *Good Morning America*, the fourteen books she's written, and her regular column for LifetimeTV.com.

Unlike Warren, however, she neither founded the company (she was brought in by PerfectMatch's Duane Dahl), nor follows Warren's credo of simplicity. In fact, the nifty-sounding Duet Compatibility Profiler takes some complex deconstruction. This makes sense, given that Schwartz has been studying gender relations since the early 1970s, when she was a sociology graduate student at Yale and wrote a Ph.D. thesis on how people hooked up in the college mixer system.

Like Helen Fisher, the Rutgers anthropologist, Schwartz believes that both similarity and complementarity are integral to romantic compatibility. But while Fisher has more of an "it depends" attitude on the question of which of the two makes sense for a particular couple under particular circumstances, Schwartz has a more elaborately defined system, which she outlines in her latest book, *Finding Your Perfect Match*.

Schwartz's Duet model consists of a mere forty-eight questions and focuses on eight specific personality characteristics: romantic impulsivity, personal energy, outlook, predictability, flexibility, decision-making style, emotional-ity, and self-nurturing style. On the first four, she believes, a well-suited couple should be similar; on the last four, however, a couple can thrive on either similarity or difference—provided that both people know themselves well enough to determine which works best.

"My first thought was, *Know yourself*," Schwartz said of how she created PerfectMatch's system. "How can you pick somebody else if you have no insight into yourself?"

Her questionnaire, she believes, will help users to think in a conscious way about who they are. As an example of the kind of introspection she hopes for, Schwartz cites the area of money. "It's a very important thing," she said, "and there's very little research on it, because nobody wants to talk about money. I can ask people if they're orgasmic, and they'll tell me in a second. But ask a subject about money, and they're embarrassed."

When it comes to money, PerfectMatch asks users to get specific—and honest—about how important it is to them. "I want them to think about things like, Should parents pay for college education no matter what it costs? Do you feel you need to make extravagant purchases every once in a while?" Other tests generally stop at innocuous questions about whether people consider themselves fiscally responsible, but Schwartz ventures into un-PC territory with true-or-false statements like, "All other things being equal, I tend to respect people who make a lot of money more than people who have modest incomes"; "I could not love a person who doesn't make enough money to help me live the lifestyle I need in order to be happy"; and "I would very much prefer to be with someone who did not have major economic responsibilities to children or parents unless they had a lot of money and these responsibilities did not affect our life together."

Like Chemistry.com's system, Duet has its roots in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. But, Schwartz explained, Duet

My matches included a film editor wearing a kilt—and not in an ironic way. Was this the best science could do?

is different from Myers-Briggs in several ways. It has eight characteristics to Myers-Briggs's four; it uses two personality profiles—similarity and complementarity—instead of one; and it relies on studies from a number of fields, rather than just psychology, to determine how these personality characteristics combine in romantic situations, as opposed to general workplace or team-building ones.

"If, say, I'm rigid in my tastes but I have a sense of humor," Schwartz explained, "you can work with me. But if I'm rigid and very earnest, it's going to be difficult. So in our test it's not just, 'Is this person rigid?' Because rigidity can co-exist with humor or earnestness, and which one of those traits is present makes a big difference. It's important how these traits are put together."

I took the Duet test and was classified on the similarity scale as X, A, C, and V—that is, Risk Averse, High Energy, Cautious, and Seeks Variety. The site then interpreted the findings, which, to my surprise, rather accurately captured my personality:

You are careful about entering a relationship. You have a cautious side to your personality on more than one dimen-

sion, and so it takes you awhile to believe in love and romance with someone you are dating. Nonetheless, you are a high energy, intense kind of person. Once you believe in a relationship, you can be a good partner. If you give it enough time. You demand a lot from the world and you take on a lot. You probably want someone who does the same, or at least supports your own high energy, explorative approach to life.

Yet the complementarity section of my test results—those traits on which my best match might be similar or different—reflected my temperament on only two of the four parameters. I was characterized as S, C, T, and E—that is, Structured, Compromiser, Temperate, and Extrovert—but I'm neither a C nor a T.

Schwartz wasn't ruffled by these inaccuracies. "PerfectMatch is the only scientific site out there that's completely transparent and user-operated," she said. "If you disagree with me, you can retake the test anytime and get a different profile that more accurately reflects the subtleties we may have missed. Or you can keep the same profile, but in addition to the matches we provide for you, you can do a search on your own. Say I think a passionate person would want another passionate person. But maybe you know about yourself that you're passionate, but want a calm person, someone who stops the escalation of things. I don't care if what you think is theoretically sound; if it doesn't work for you, you can search using your own criteria."

This, she said, distinguishes PerfectMatch from eHarmony and Chemistry.com. "In the Chemistry test," said Schwartz, who is a friend of Helen Fisher's and a fan of her work, "there was a question about where you'd like to live. And I chose the country. And I *would*—but the people I tend to prefer are in the city. So they sent me people from Bass Breath, Arizona. And there was no way I could change it! At PerfectMatch, we don't overdetermine people's answers that way."

What Schwartz is referring to, of course, is the bugaboo of all these compatibility-matching systems: nuance. "Even if a site lets you choose physical characteristics like height," she said, "there's no way it's going to guess your physical template. It could be lankiness in one case, it could be somebody's eyes in another. We can't get that out of a questionnaire. Nobody can. So we say, 'Go look at the pictures on our site, see who you find attractive, then look at their personality types and see if they're compatible [with you]. You have that option on PerfectMatch.'"

The advantage to scientific matching, she says, isn't to come up with some foolproof formula for romantic connection. Instead, the science serves as a reality check, as a way of not letting that initial rush of attraction cloud your judgment when it comes to compatibility.

"I went out with a man for about a year who, if I'd taken the test with him—we both would have known we should have stopped early on," Schwartz said. "But, of course, I



was attracted to him, and probably to the characteristics that were wrong for me, for the wrong reasons. That's what attraction can do. But if you're also armed with information about compatibility—or lack of compatibility—from the very beginning, you might think twice before getting involved, before you make the mistake of e-mailing the cute guy in the picture, like you might on Match."

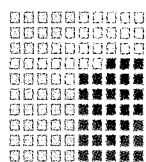
Schwartz, who had been married for twenty-three years before she reentered the dating pool, empathizes with PerfectMatch users. "I know what dating is like," she said. "I'm doing it, too. You start to burn out, and you need to find a certain amount of positive reinforcement. So if we can cut down the really inappropriate personalities for you, we can help out."

Of course, before the days of Myers-Briggs and PerfectMatch and academic departments devoted to deconstructing romantic relationships, there were matchmakers. And today, despite the science, they're still thriving. One of the West Coast's largest matchmaking agencies is called Debra Winkler Personal Search, and its slogan is the opposite of scientific: "The art of the perfect match." Indeed, in the FAQ section of the company's Web site, the reply to "How do you go about matching members?" reads as follows:

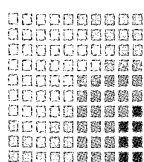
Our matchmakers use a combination of tools—including experience and intuition—when matching members. We start with basic demographic information such as age, religion, location, physical requirements and other preferences. Personality profiles are also used but not relied upon exclusively. In the end, however, it comes down to your personal matchmaker.

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

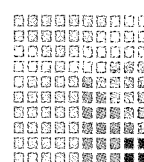
Findings from a recent Pew study on American online dating habits—the first national study of its kind



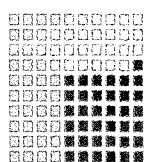
One in three respondents was unattached ...



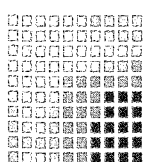
... but just 7% were actively looking for partners ...



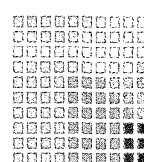
... and only 4% had been on a date in the last three months.



Of those singles looking for partners, 37% had tried online dating sites ...



... roughly half of those had actually gone on dates as a result ...



... about a third of whom had formed long-term relationships.

SURVEY OF 3,215 AMERICAN ADULTS BY THE PEW INTERNET AND AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT, 2005

They hand-select the individuals for you to meet. And it is not based on some absolute, statistical formula. It's more like a feeling, gained from years of experience, that tells them you and another person would be great for each other.

Winkler founded the company eighteen years ago and sold it in 2003, leaving its day-to-day operations to Annie Ahlin, who worked with Winkler for fourteen years and until November was the company's president.

"Intuition is a big part of determining long-term compatibility," Ahlin told me. She said many of the agency's clients are people who have tried scientific matching online but had no luck. Ahlin believes she knows why. "When you're reading a profile online, or looking at a photo, it's one-dimensional," she explained. "It's that person's PR for themselves." There's no substitute, she believes, for sitting down with a person one-on-one to get the full picture.

"When we meet our clients, we get a multifaceted impression," she said. "I may read on your profile that you love cats, but when I ask you about it, I learn that you had a beloved cat when you were three and now you're allergic to them. Or, I'll read a personality profile, but when I sit down with this person, I'll think, *Wow, I didn't know she had this kind of energy.* It wasn't reflected on the page."

While the Winkler clients fill out personality profiles similar to the ones found online, the difference, Ahlin believes, is the hour-and-a-half interview. Some of these matchmakers have a psychological background, but others are recruited for different reasons. "We go for people who have a heart, are good listeners, are empathetic, and who just have a feel for matching people for the long term," Ahlin told me. "On resumes, we look for evidence of good people skills—PR, customer service, nursing. It's not necessarily about an intellectual understanding. People either get it or they don't."

Ahlin estimates the agency's success rate at 70 percent—meaning that 70 percent of clients either end up in a relationship engineered by their matchmakers or get engaged to someone they've met through the agency. But unlike the stud-

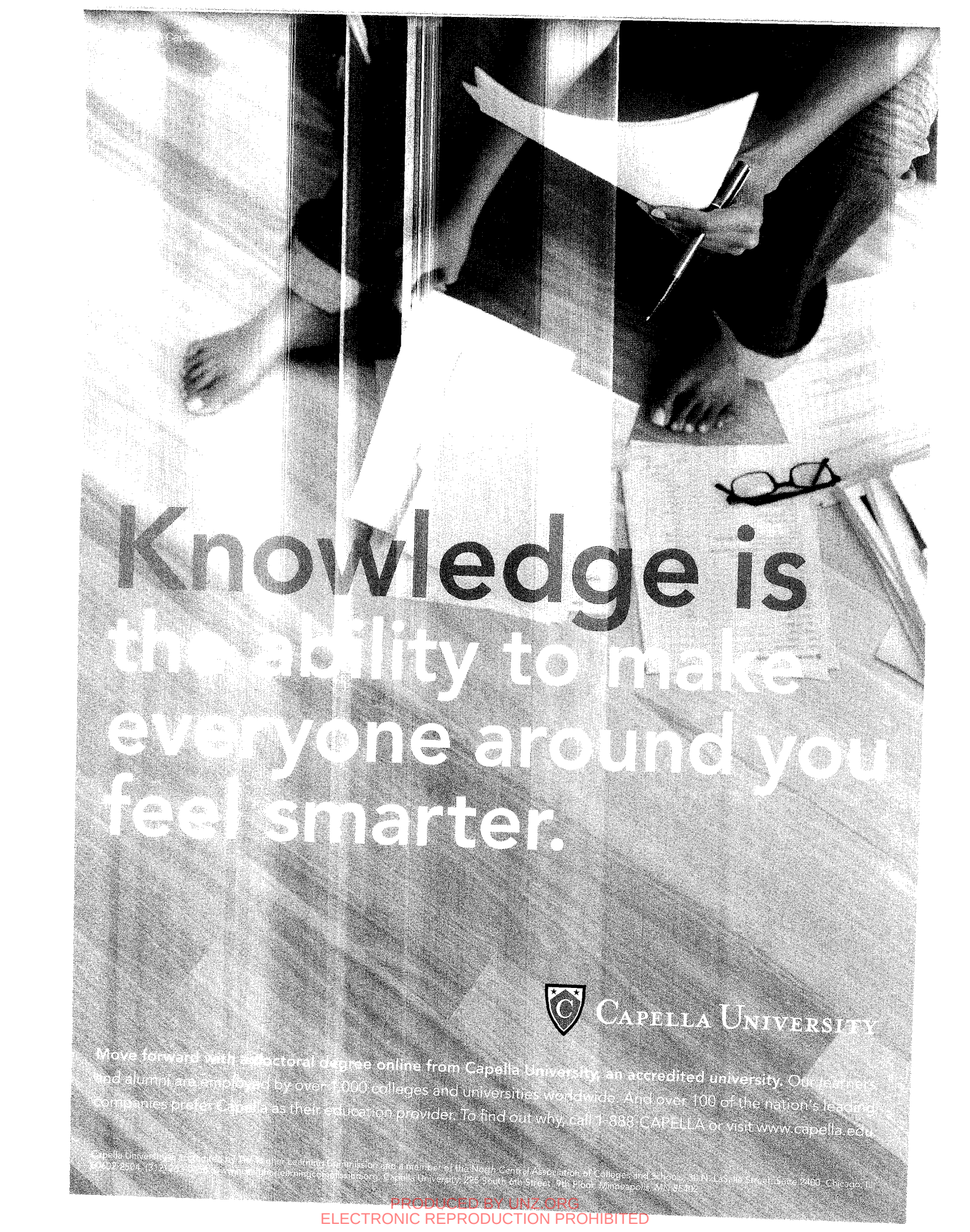
ies being done at eHarmony, there's no follow-up to determine how long these relationships or marriages last, or how satisfying they are down the line. Besides, Ahlin admitted, other variables may play a role in the high number of pairings. "When you pay eight or ten thousand dollars for a service like ours," she said, "you seriously want to find someone. It puts the notion 'I'm really ready' into your subconscious."

Ahlin and her matchmakers use feedback forms like those on Chemistry.com to learn how a match went after two clients have met in person. But whereas the Chemistry.com people classify this step as part of their scientific research, Ahlin says simply, "This way, you know what it is that works so you can get closer the next time—it helps us with intuition."

Often when Ahlin talks about intuition, she describes the same principles that the scientists I spoke with use in their empirically based matching systems. For instance, in matching couples, she follows what is essentially the similarity-complementarity model. "For a match to be successful," Ahlin said, "a couple's goals have to be the same, they have to want the same things in life." But, she added, "that doesn't mean they should be the same person. On the one hand, it's good if they have the same experiences, but sometimes having experiences that are different adds energy to the relationship."

Like Helen Fisher and Pepper Schwartz, Annie Ahlin believes that similarity and complementarity are situational models. "Each person is unique and contradictory," she told me, "and you can't just group people into big categories, the way the personality profiles do. So one person who is a Type A may be attracted to Type A in the beginning, but then we send them out and find out they need a Type B. So we adjust along the way. We're always adjusting. It's not a scientific process, it's an intuitive one."

Gian Gonzaga, the UCLA researcher hired by eHarmony, doesn't dismiss matchmakers. "I wouldn't be surprised if the basic constructs they're measuring are the exact same ones [that scientists measure]," he



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NO ORDINARY LOVE

While Web sites like eHarmony.com and Chemistry.com attempt to help people of all sorts find potential mates, a number of other online matchmaking services target smaller populations. Herewith a sampling of some of the more specific niche offerings, as they describe themselves:

Conservative Match (www.conservativematch.com)—"Sweethearts not bleeding hearts"

Liberal Hearts (www.liberalhearts.com)—"Uniting Democrats, Greens, animal lovers & environmentalists who are like in mind and liberal in love"

Good Genes (www.goodgenes.com)—"[Helping] Ivy Leaguers and similarly well-educated graduates and faculty find others with matching credentials"

MillionaireMatch (www.millionairematch.com)—"Where you can add a touch of romance to success and achievement!"

The Atlasphere (www.theatlasphere.com)—"A place where admirers of Ayn Rand's novels can meet, 365 days a year, to network, find shared interests, and perhaps ... even fall in love"

May-December (www.maydecember.net)—"Years apart, coming together"

Golfmates (www.golfmates.com)—"The world's premier online dating service designed specifically for the golfing community"

Riders2Love (www.riders2love.com)—"Bringing Bikers Together ... For a Ride or For a Lifetime"

EquestrianCupid (www.equestriancupid.com)—"The best dating site in the world for friends and singles who are horse lovers"

CowboyCowgirl (www.cowboycowgirl.com)—"Join thousands of singles that share your love for the country way of life"

GothicMatch (www.gothicmatch.com)—"Where gothic friends and singles feel at home!"

Single FireFighters (www.singlefirefighters.com)—"The ONLY place to meet firefighters without calling 911!"

Positive Love (www.positivelove.com)—"Don't let STDs control your Love Life"

Singles with Scruples (www.singleswithscruples.com)—" [Emphasizing] integrity and good character"

Private Affairs (www.philanderers.com)—"Discreet Extramarital Personal Ads exclusively for discriminating men and women seeking an Extramarital Affair"

Asexual Pals (www.asexualpals.com)—"Because there is so much more to life!"

said. "Those who are good at matchmaking are the ones who get that four or five things are really critical."

I asked Gonzaga what those four or five things are, and he let out a long sigh.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, sheepishly. "It's funny enough, but I don't know. A similar sense of values. Other things, like agreeableness or warmth, are probably fairly important in terms of people matching up. You want two people who are relatively similar on wanting to cuddle, or things like that."

At the word "cuddle," I raised an eyebrow.

"It's kind of an unscientific term," he said, "but ..."

I asked Gonzaga if using science to try to find lasting love might be too lofty a goal—a method that seems promising in theory but that turns out to be no more effective than consulting a matchmaker or cruising at your local bar. He disagreed.

"Imagine being in a bar," he said, "and how hard it would be to find five people you might connect with. If you actually match those people in the beginning, you're increasing your odds of meeting someone. Also, some people go to a bar to have a drink, some to meet people. We put people seriously looking for a relationship in one place, at the same time. So I think it's both the medium and it's the scale. And a matchmaker only knows so many people, but there are eight million or ten million users on eHarmony."

Moreover, in the future, science-based dating sites will evolve in ways that mimic real-world situations. Galen Buckwalter, eHarmony's research-and-development head, said that rather than relying on self-reports to assess how comfortable a person feels in social situations, his group is developing a model that will use computer simulation to immerse people in scenarios—a bar, a party, an intimate dinner—where variables like gender composition can be altered. "How does this person interact differently as the variables change?" Buckwalter asked. "I don't think we'll be relying on self-report twenty years from now. I think not only will data collection advance, but so will our analysis. We're just at the beginning, really."

Indeed, it may well take a generation before we learn whether the psychological, anthropological, or sociological model works best. Or maybe an entirely different theory will emerge. But at the very least, these dating sites and the relationships they spawn will help us to determine whether science has a place, and if so, how much of a place, in affairs of the heart.

Meanwhile, until these sites start sending me better dating prospects, I figured I'd take Neil Clark Warren up on his offer to introduce me to the thirty-eight-year-old single board member he thought would be such a good match for me. But when I asked a company spokesman about him, I was told that he had recently begun seeing someone. Did they meet through eHarmony? My potential soul mate declined to answer. ■

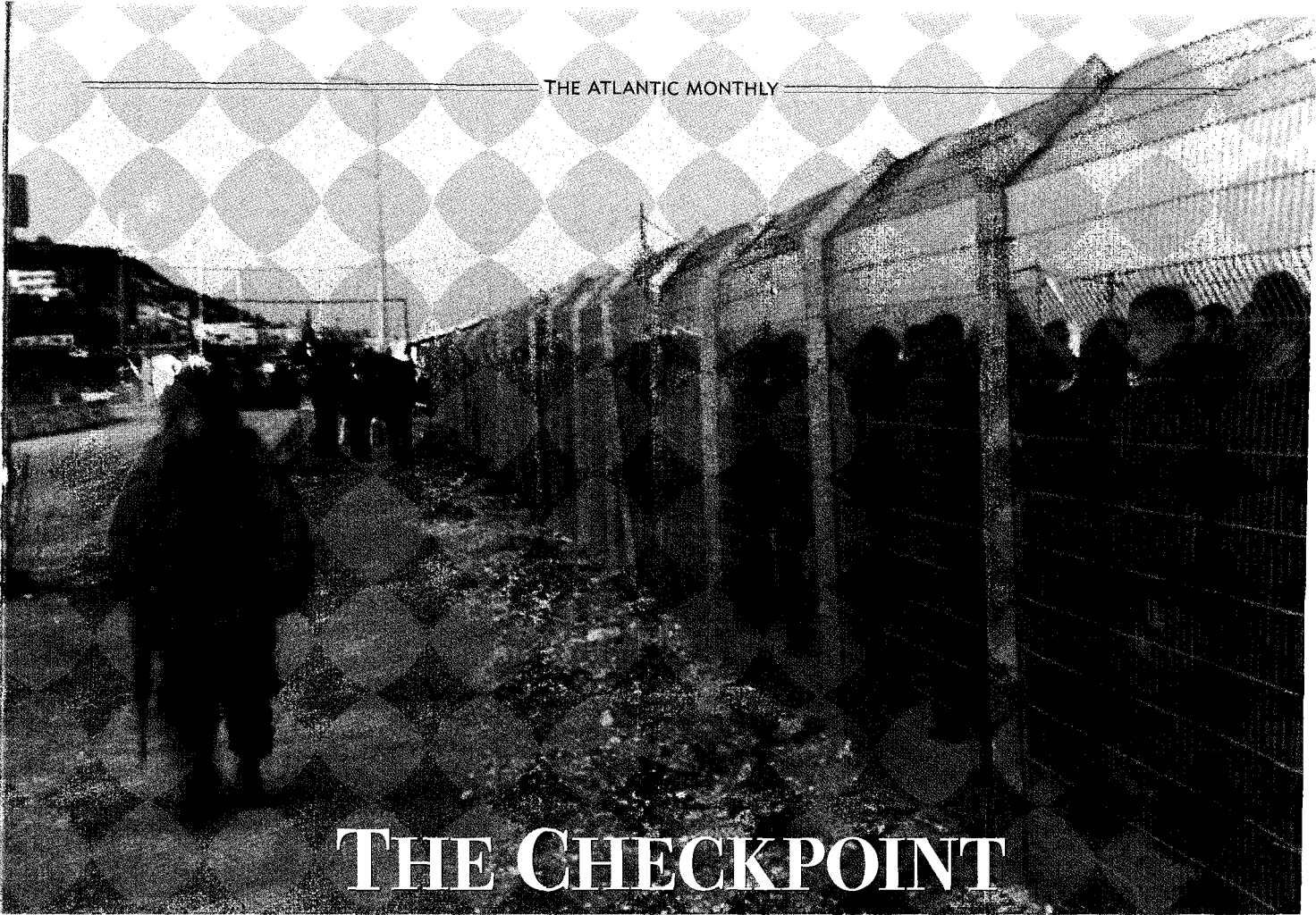


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THE CHECKPOINT

*For Israeli soldiers checkpoint life is dull, alienating, and stress-inducing.
For the Palestinians it is frustrating, humiliating, and anger-provoking.
Yet it's the human face of the occupation—and as close as some Israelis and Palestinians will ever come*

BY TED CONOVER

.....

We in the modern world are used to waiting, and the first time one passes through a checkpoint in the West Bank, one thinks, *Oh, this looks kind of familiar. This won't be so bad. I will just need to stand in line a bit.*

But then one sees that rather than a simple queue, this is more like a funnel—wide enough where it begins for thirty people to stand side by side, at the end of an open-air shed with a corrugated tin roof, but narrowing a few yards farther on, where everyone is pushing toward two tall turnstiles. One afternoon in the fall of 2004 (but it could as well have been today) it took forty minutes to reach the front at Qalandia, the checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem. It was an exercise in gradual compression: I went from having some choice of movement (I'll head for the *left* turnstile) to having none at all, as my footsteps were foreshortened by the people in front, my arms were pinioned by the people beside me, and my shoulders were bumped by the people behind.

Ted Conover is the author of Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing, and is a distinguished writer-in-residence at New York University.

Sometimes a checkpoint queue creates a sense of instant community: we are all occupying one another's space, all suffering together, and conversation can provide relief. The man at my right, it turned out, was a doctor. He was returning home to East Jerusalem from work at a clinic in Ramallah, as he does every day. "Sharon's strategy is to make it so bad we will leave," he said. "He forgets we have nowhere else to go."

Because this was my first time through, I expressed some concern about the squeeze to which we were increasingly subjected. He warned me not to drop anything—an ID, for example—because it would be impossible now to stoop down and pick it up. He looked tired as he told me that it had been even worse before the Israelis put up the metal roof and created some shade.

To be encased, as I was, in a crowd of 200 or 300 people is a sort of temporary imprisonment. If the crowd panicked, we would all be in trouble.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Palestinians line up at the Hawara checkpoint while waiting to enter the West Bank city of Nablus

I was thinking these thoughts because just a month earlier, bombers en route from Jenin to Haifa had gotten spooked and exploded a device at this very checkpoint, killing two Palestinians and wounding six Israeli policemen. And only the day before a Palestinian woman had blown herself up in the Jerusalem neighborhood of French Hill, just a few miles from Qalandia, killing two Israeli policemen. And yet I had the feeling that if I were to freak out—say, from claustrophobia—the people around me would try hard to let me out. A situation like this increases one’s sensitivity to the stress level of one’s neighbors.

The doctor and I were separated a few minutes later, just as we neared what seemed to be the most fraught part of the ordeal: trying to decide when to step into an open space in the turnstile. The pressure from behind had grown so great that the decision was now almost entirely beyond my control; I had to lean backward to keep from walking into the ends of the turning bars. I also had to be careful not to stomp on the foot of a child or an elderly person. To my relief, a muscular man approaching the turnstile at the same time said, “Hello, my friend,” and used his bulk, like a dike against the ocean, to create a small discretionary pocket of space for me. A minute later I stepped through the turnstile

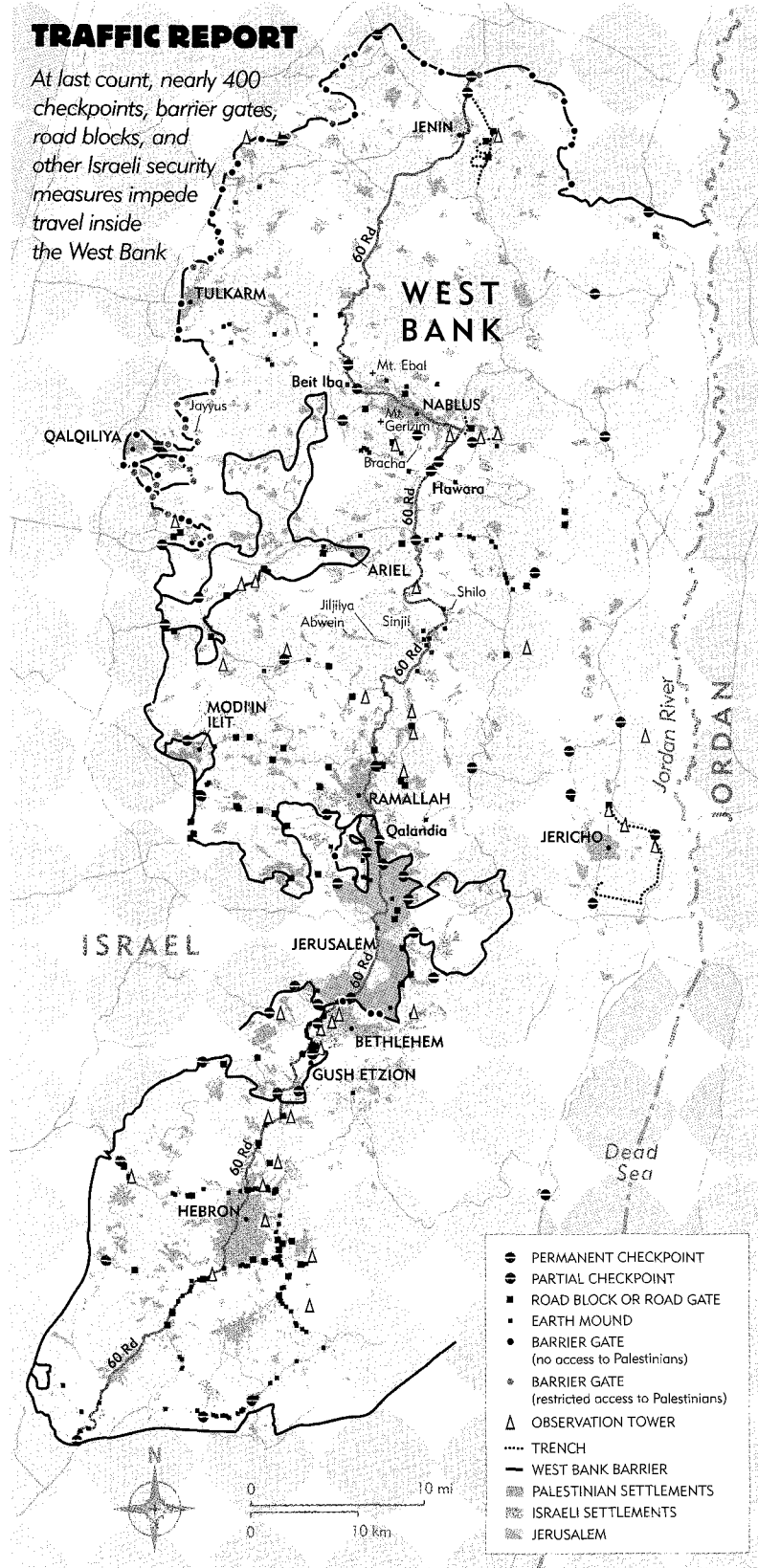
of my own accord and said, “*Shukran*” — “Thanks.”

It should have been a relief to be on the other side, approaching the end of the shed, except that this is where the guns are. About ten Israeli soldiers were visible that day, all of them young and laden with combat gear, including M4 assault rifles. Things moved faster now. A young female soldier examined the contents of my shoulder bag. Ten steps beyond her another soldier protected by a wall of concrete blocks, a thick plastic window, and goggles motioned me forward. I handed him my passport and journalist’s ID. He studied them for a fairly long time, pausing (as Israeli officials tend to) at a visa I had gotten years before for a tourist trip to an Arab country. Then he handed them back wordlessly and turned to the person behind me. That meant I was through. Walking out into the open air beyond, into the bustling taxi lot and impromptu bazaar that every checkpoint occasions, I felt as though I’d been paroled.

With the Gaza withdrawal complete and the death of Yasir Arafat fading into memory, the world’s attention is turning once again to the land that remains among the world’s most contentious: the West Bank. The violence that ebbed in the months following the death of Arafat is on the rise again; suicide bombings have returned to Israel as settlements continue to encroach on Palestinian land. The intifada never really went away, and neither did

At last count, nearly 400 checkpoints, barrier gates, road blocks, and other Israeli security measures impede travel inside the West Bank

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Israel manages its occupation of the West Bank—which is home to 1.3 million Palestinians and 400,000 Israeli settlers and is roughly the size of Delaware—to a large degree *by restricting the travel of Palestinians*. The most famous symbol of this restriction is the new “security fence” still

Each checkpoint has a different character. Most permit both vehicles and pedestrians to pass, but some allow only pedestrians. Some close at dusk and open at dawn, permitting no passage at night; others are closed to vehicles at night but allow pedestrians through. Some allow anything to pass once the soldiers have left for the night. And some change the rules from day to day.

What are the checkpoints for? Israeli officials say that like almost everything else in the West Bank, checkpoints are for security—they enable the Israeli army to interdict weapons and bombers. The army hopes to find some of these through random searches; others may be captured through the powerful Israeli intelligence agency, Shin Bet, which provides daily updates on whom and what to look for. But soldiers at checkpoints spend most of their time examining the identity documents issued by Israel and by the Palestinian Authority to every Palestinian aged sixteen and up. If a man's residence is in Nablus but he's headed for

Whether at crossings of the security fence or at strategic points inside the territories, checkpoints provide the

human face of the occupation—this is as close as some Israelis and Palestinians will ever come. The face is seldom friendly: taciturn soldiers meet put-upon civilians, investigate their documents, and decide (often according to mood, Palestinians say) whether they may cross over to the other side. Sometimes the soldiers make Palestinians wait for hours in holding areas. For the soldiers checkpoint life is often grindingly dull, stress-inducing, and alienating. For the Palestinians it is monumentally frustrating, humiliating, and anger-provoking.

Checkpoints can also be brutal. During my visit the Israeli military convicted the commander of the Hawara checkpoint, just south of Nablus, of beating numerous Palestinians and smashing the windows of ten Palestinian taxis. One of the army's own cameramen had videotaped the commander in the act of bashing a Palestinian man in the face with his fist while the man's toddler held on to his shirttails; the camera's audio then picked up the sounds of the man's being punched or kicked in the stomach inside a hut where the commander had dragged him. One of the cruelest indignities to which they are subjected, Palestinians say, is the capricious and sometimes hours-long detention of ambulances carrying Palestinian patients; according to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, at least seventy-one Palestinians have died because they were delayed unnecessarily at checkpoints.

According to the Israeli military, a total of fifty-six Israeli soldiers and border police officers have been killed at checkpoints and roadblocks since the second intifada began, in September of 2000. In 2003 two were shot dead south of Jerusalem by a Palestinian man carrying a rifle rolled up in a prayer rug. In December of 2004 members of Hamas and Fatah tunneled several hundred yards to place more than a ton of explosives beneath a checkpoint in Rafah, near the Egyptian border with Gaza. The attack killed five soldiers. And in December of last year a Palestinian passing through the Qalandia checkpoint, right where I had walked, fatally stabbed a soldier in the neck.

Omer (the Israel Defense Forces forbade me from using his last name, or the last names of any of the soldiers I got to know) is a wiry, affable red-haired man of twenty-six who commands a company of the elite 202 Paratrooper Battalion. His company consisted of about a hundred young army conscripts, and in the fall of 2004 they occupied a base camp atop a hill between Ramallah and Nablus, where I stayed for almost two weeks. The base is located just off a major highway known as the 60 Road.

The 60 Road runs north-south through the entire West Bank and is the main connection between the cities of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron. In ancient times the route extended all the way north to Damascus and as far south as Beersheva. The problem with the 60 Road, Omer told me, is that it has become a thruway

for terrorists. The security fence has yet to be completed in Jerusalem and many areas in the south—one reason, according to the military, that on August 31, 2004, ten days before my arrival in Israel, suicide bombers from Hebron were able to kill sixteen people in two separate attacks on buses in Beersheva. More recently other bombers have increasingly used the 60 Road to travel south from the politically turbulent cities of the north. So in addition to Hawara and the other permanent checkpoints along the road, the Israeli army deploys units like Omer's to patrol it. "A suicide bomber traveling from Nablus to Jerusalem will have to go right past us—and we'll try to stop him," Omer told me. His company sets up flying checkpoints, conducts surveillance missions, and makes nighttime arrests in nearby Arab villages, usually acting on tips from the Shin Bet.

Israeli officials say that like almost everything else in the West Bank, checkpoints are for security. But for Palestinians they have become not just bureaucratic irritants but emblems of Israeli arrogance.

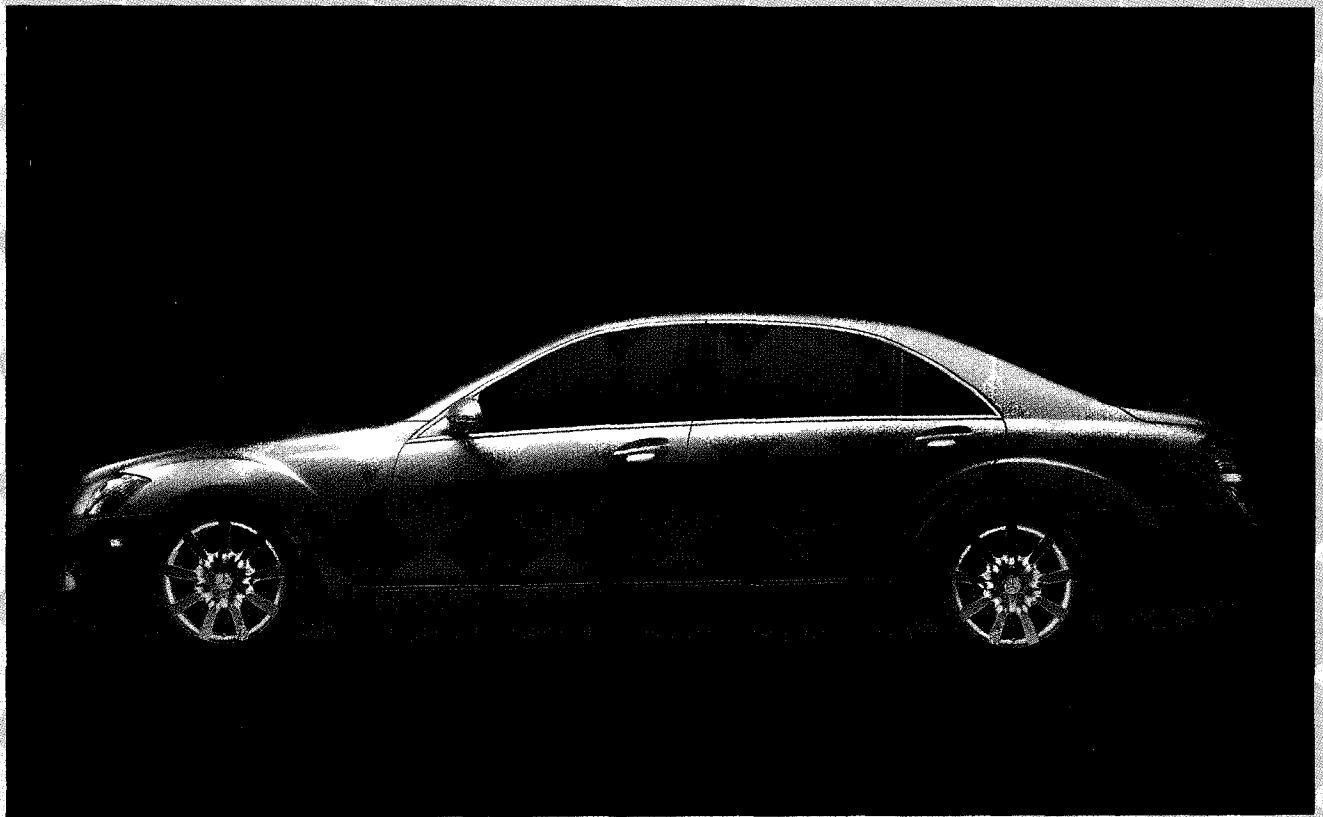
Though still in his twenties, Omer has already served nearly eight years in the army. He still carries shrapnel in his leg from fighting against Hezbollah in Lebanon in the late 1990s, yet he is nostalgic for those days, because in that job he was engaged in actual combat, which to him is real soldier's work. "The Hezbollah warrior was like me, dressed up like me—he had a gun," Omer told me one afternoon in his command trailer. "When one of our guys fell, it was like, hey, they were shooting, we were shooting. It was an army for us. It was sexier. And there was no question in terms of the conflict. There was Hezbollah, a clearly terrorist organization. But here the mission is trickier to explain to the soldiers—what you've achieved in terms of terrorism, how you buy time, buy intelligence, and at the end you will catch them."

He continued the comparison. In the West Bank "the collateral damage is unbelievably higher," he said. "In Lebanon the villages were either with you or against you—they'd fight alongside you, or else shoot back. Here the collateral damage in moral terms is unbelievably problematic, and that's a serious problem in the long term."

Innocent civilians, in other words, are inevitably damaged by the army's work in the territories. "Searching a house, looking for a gun, taking in nineteen- to twenty-one-year-old kids and telling them it's okay to turn the house upside down to find one gun. It's bad for the guy's four children in there—that's obvious. But what's not plain until the fifteenth time is that it's bad for you."

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Israeli soldiers are posted to checkpoints for anywhere from two to six months; three months is typical. Before the current assignment, on the 60 Road between Ramallah and Nablus, Omer's company had spent a little more than three months at Hawara. Most of the Hawara posting, he freely admitted, had been exhausting and dispiriting. In rotating shifts the soldiers spent eight hours on duty, eight hours off, with few breaks. Every day 5,000 Palestinians—a mass of humanity with whom it was difficult to communicate—passed through Hawara. Many of them were inclined to ignore, or even argue with, the soldiers' orders. Against this backdrop Omer's soldiers had to be ever on the lookout for the person in the crowd who might be wired to blow them up.

Fortunately for company morale, two incidents toward the end of their posting showed that hard work could pay dividends. In the first a female soldier, looking in the large gym bag of a ten-year-old boy, discovered a cell phone with wires attached, and beneath it a bomb. When questioned, the boy seemed to know nothing about the bomb. Apparently a man near the checkpoint just a few minutes earlier had offered him a few shekels to carry the bag through. Army officials believe the bomber was simply trying to sneak the bomb through the checkpoint, but they always worry about what Omer calls the "default threat": the chance that the bomber, once discovered, will set off the bomb no matter where he is.

A Palestinian man holds his ID card after Israeli troops closed the Hawara checkpoint following a bomb-carrying boy's arrest

The second incident came nine days later. A soldier of Omer's named Doron, nineteen years old and from the city of Rishon LeZion, just south of Tel Aviv, had been in charge of a checkpoint line that morning. He told me what happened: "It was maybe two P.M., and the Shin Bet called me and said, 'There's a bomber in your line!' And I said, 'What do they look like?' They said, 'Maybe a girl, maybe a boy, maybe fourteen, maybe sixteen.'" The Shin Bet monitors cell-phone transmissions in the area around the checkpoint, and had overheard the bomber making a call. Doron immediately closed down the checkpoint and ordered everyone waiting in line to stand back and then to approach the soldiers one at a time for thorough pat-downs. "Then a kid—we said, 'Remove the jacket,' and he didn't want to; he was shaking," Doron recalled. "But then he did, and we could see something under his jersey. So we said, 'Lift your shirt.' And so he did." When the soldiers saw that the boy was wearing a vest wired with explosives, they trained their guns on him. A bomb robot was deployed to deliver a pair of scissors to the boy, which he used to cut off the vest. The soldiers then exploded the bomb.

The Army wanted the world to know about the dangers its soldiers face in the Palestinian territories, so Israeli officials had called an AP stringer in Nablus and arranged for a television camera to tape the incident. Images of the frightened

boy dressed in the vest and holding up his arms were soon transmitted around the world. Afterward, as a souvenir of the episode, Omer's soldiers had a T-shirt made with a likeness of the boy and a caption that read, "They promised me 72 virgins in heaven, but instead I got the soldiers of the 202."

After doing their time at the Hawara checkpoint, Omer and his company spent a few high-adrenaline months in Nablus, a city roiling with politics and rebellion, which the Israelis considered to be a major source of terrorism. Their experiences were both terrible and, to hear Omer tell it, thrilling. Under cover of night they would slip into town—sometimes in an armored vehicle, sometimes on foot, occasionally disguised—to arrest suspects. They drove through the impoverished Balata refugee camp, on the southeast edge of Nablus, attempting to draw fire from insurgents in order to discover their hideouts. They demolished the dwellings of Palestinians who, according to intelligence reports, had engaged in attacks against Israel. In one incident a Palestinian boy threw a stone that broke Omer's nose. In another Omer's second-in-command was ambushed, and Omer himself, coming from behind an ambulance that had been called to the scene, walked right into a boy who was holding a lighted Molotov cocktail. Omer shot him reflexively fourteen or fifteen times "in the legs"—"but he died."

Omer and some of his soldiers also recall having to drive into Nablus—in broad daylight on a number of occasions—to rescue buddies whose vehicles had become trapped or disabled. During some of these missions residents on rooftops assaulted the vehicles with an assortment of heavy objects, ranging from cinder blocks to an oven. I asked one of Omer's drivers, a dark-humored man named Adam, which parts of Nablus were the most dangerous. Which were the bad spots? "All of Nablus is a bad spot," he muttered.

One day Omer drove me up the hill overlooking the Hawara checkpoint, past an Israeli-only road leading to Bracha, a Jewish settlement of 400 to 450 people (checkpoint soldiers have barracks there, too), and, a little higher up, through an ancient town of Samaritans, who are now Israeli citizens. The hill, which is called Mt. Gerizim, is mentioned in the Bible; Abraham, having just received the promise from God "I will make of thee a great nation," had brought his tribe to set up camp in the oak grove between Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, a hill to the north. Out of that camp grew the biblical city of Shchem, which today is Nablus, home to 300,000 Palestinians. It's an affront to many of them—and illustrative of the problems facing this region—that Israeli road signs refer to their city not as Nablus but as Shchem.

My mental image of Nablus, based on the descriptions of soldiers I talked to, was of a large, foul-smelling slum. So I was surprised to see gleaming white buildings, many of them tall and invitingly perched on either side of a valley. At least from a distance, Nablus was beautiful. But to Omer the view was less glorious. He pointed out one landmark after another

where bad things had happened to him and his company. As we made our descent, he pointed out a building that the soldiers called the Disco: it was a Palestinian party hall that the paratroopers had taken over during the tensions of 2002 in order to provide the settlers with additional protection. One night, as the soldiers slept, two Palestinian militants attacked, killing a sergeant and a lieutenant before they themselves were killed. Losing those two soldiers seemed to be Omer's most painful experience, and yet I could see that some part of him really wanted me to know what had happened in Nablus. It had been his idea to come here. Weeks later, when I met up again with Omer and told him I had gone back to Nablus alone, he seemed amazed—and also a bit envious.

Every day 5,000 Palestinians—a mass of humanity with whom it was difficult to communicate—passed through the Hawara checkpoint.

Israeli soldiers had to be ever on the lookout for the person in the crowd who might be wired to blow them up.

Israeli civilians are forbidden by military order to enter Palestinian towns; indeed, it would be dangerous for most of them to do so. But I'd been told it wouldn't necessarily be dangerous for me, as a non-Israeli and a non-Jew. And so, in hopes of understanding checkpoints from a Palestinian point of view, I went.

I needed a Palestinian commuter, and I found one in the person of Abdul-Latif M. Khaled, a hydrologist who was educated in Holland. He lived not in Nablus but in Jayyus, a village about twenty miles to the west. His daily commute had once been an easy thirty minutes, he told me. Now between home and office loomed two permanent checkpoints and as many as five flying checkpoints, and the trip often took more than two hours each way. The afternoon of my visit Khaled invited me to attend a presentation on the subject of water conservation that he was giving in Nablus to officials from more than two dozen local villages. When it was over, we boarded a shared "service taxi"—an aging yellow Mercedes wagon typical of the semi-public transportation available in the West Bank—for the journey to his house.

Khaled is a tall, well-dressed man in his late thirties who speaks excellent English and clearly commanded the respect of the officials. As the two of us settled into the taxi, he chatted with the other passengers about the afternoon checkpoint situation, trying to assess what lay ahead. It was the Palestinian version of a radio traffic report. There was no alternate route, but at least he would know what to expect.

After passing through a flying checkpoint inside Nablus, we disembarked from the taxi at Beit Iba, a neighborhood on the city's northwestern edge, and walked to a terminal-style checkpoint similar to the ones at Qalandia and Hawara. With roughly 250 people waiting to go through, Khaled expected that it would take us about half an hour to get to the front, assuming all went well. When I sighed, he told me just to be glad we weren't there on a Thursday afternoon, when the students at nearby An-Najah National University headed home for the weekend. Their numbers, he said, usually swelled the queue to several hundred.

After fifteen or twenty minutes the tides and currents of the crowd separated us, and I found myself pushed up against a man in a checked shirt—or, rather, pushed up against his satellite dish. Apparently he planned to hand-carry the waist-high dish through the queue. As absurd as this seemed at first, it soon occurred to me that he probably had no other choice, and so I did what I could to help. Others did too. Before long the crowd had deposited me at the turnstile just ahead of him.

“They close a road, we find a hundred roads!” proclaimed Khaldoon al-Khatib, a Palestinian student studying psychology at Birzeit University. “We will make more roads! Anywhere!”

As I waited in a short line to reach the soldier who would examine my papers, I heard a clanking and saw that the satellite dish was stuck in the turnstile. Undeterred, the man in the checked shirt managed to dislodge the dish and started sliding it through a set of vertical bars next to the turnstile. When the job was almost finished, I reached over to help steady the satellite dish against the bars on my side.

Big mistake. The soldier in whose queue I was waiting stood up and shouted at me, demanding that I come directly to the front. His English wasn't good, but he made it clear that I had broken the rules and that he was not happy about it. I was very apologetic; it was my first time through this checkpoint, I said, and I hadn't realized I was doing anything wrong. When he took my passport and Israeli press pass, I thought I was going to be okay. But he pointed to the back of the sea of humanity in which I had recently been adrift and declared, “End of line!” Startled by this punishment, I tried to stall, promising it wouldn't happen again. Khaled, who was in front of the next soldier over, began to argue on my behalf. For his troubles he was sent away to the holding pen, a small area of hard benches behind a clump of bushes, which was filled with eight or nine other men who,

for whatever reason, had run afoul of the authorities. Still I dug in my heels. “*End of line!*” screamed the soldier.

As I started to turn back, a silent alarm seemed to go off among the soldiers: something had gone wrong toward the back of the line. My tormentor and five other soldiers picked up their M4s and ran outside the shed, quickly disappearing into the crowd. The checkpoint was now officially closed.

Twenty minutes later the soldiers returned and slowly resumed their duties. No explanation was offered, and the crowd was so big that I couldn't see what had caused the ruckus. The soldiers were uniformly young and dull-eyed, their burnout showing through and through. I approached my soldier again, and he began to reexamine my passport with an air of studied indifference. Khaled could see me from the pen and started shouting at the soldiers; they ignored him.

The soldier called over his commander, who asked me questions for fifteen minutes or so before deciding to let me pass. Khaled, however, had to stay. I walked past the soldiers and took up a position at the far end of the terminal to wait for him. To see a person of Khaled's stature treated so disrespectfully was unsettling. Several times he pointed at me; I feared that for championing my cause, he might get himself beaten up.

But after about twenty minutes the soldiers decided to let him go. Khaled was red in the face when he told me that his detention would have continued had he not been able to point at me and tell the soldiers about the bad publicity they were creating for themselves. When I blamed myself for his problems, he brushed it off. Before they would release him, he said, he had been forced to say “I am *namrood*.” He asked if I knew what that meant, and I said it sounded like “nimrod”—“idiot”? “troublemaker”? Yes, he said, though in Arabic it was more like “naughty.”

In the parking area beyond the checkpoint we ran into the mayor of Jayyus, who offered us a ride in his pickup truck. As we climbed in, Khaled said, “Sometimes they keep you in that pen until past closing time, until all the taxis have left.” He pointed to a clump of bushes next to the lot. “Once I had to sleep there, next to those.”

There was only one more checkpoint to navigate on the way home, but the relatively clear road didn't improve Khaled's mood. We came to an intersection where, he said, the week before soldiers at a flying checkpoint had collected everyone's IDs, kept them for more than an hour, and then dropped them in a pile on the road. This prompted a mad scramble that had only amused the soldiers. Without an ID no Palestinian can go anywhere.

The 202 Paratrooper company's base, just off the 60 Road, sat perched on a rounded hilltop, part of a bevy of rounded hilltops arrayed like beads on a string. This was clearly a contested area. On the sides of some hills were Palestinian villages, and on the tops of other hills were illegal Israeli settlements. It was easier

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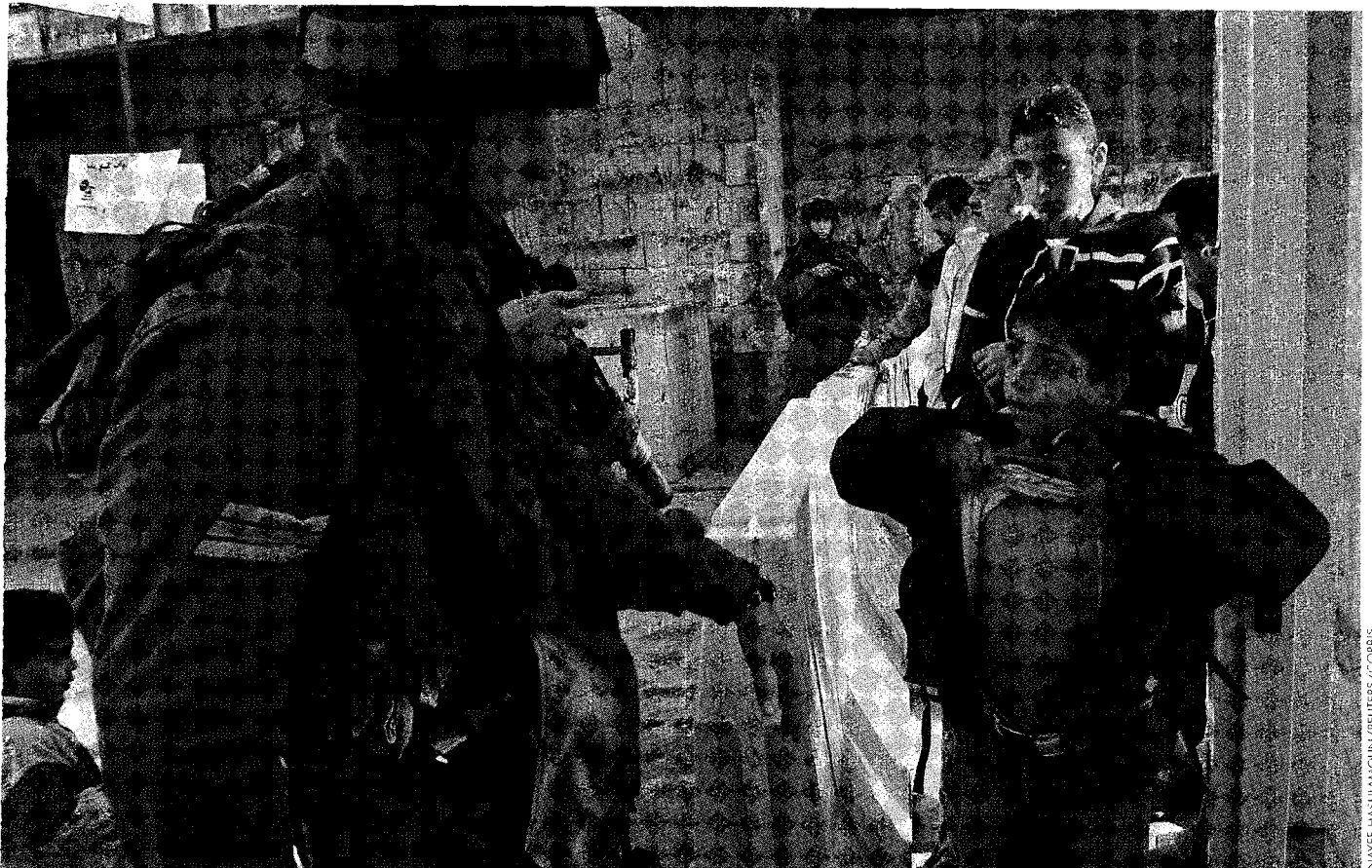
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NATEF HASHLAMOUN/REUTERS/CORBIS

An Israeli soldier orders a Palestinian child to raise his shirt during a search at a checkpoint in the center of Hebron

to distinguish them at night, when you could see that the lights in the villages were irregularly spaced and of varying brightness and color, with one prominent green light marking the mosque, whereas the lights in the settlements were regularly spaced and consistent in brightness and hue. This was because the settlements had been built subdivision-style, with many identical units.

The settlers had for years felt most unsafe not in their houses but out on the roads. Part of the 60 Road had been dubbed the "Highway of Death" four years earlier, according to Marc Prowisor, the security chief for the Shilo settlement, which I could see clearly from Omer's trailer. Many settlers had been shot at on the 60 Road and at least twenty-two had been killed. When a family of four from Shilo was attacked on the road (the parents were killed; the babies somehow survived), the settlers demanded protection from the Israeli army, and got it. Owing to the diligence of soldiers like the ones from 202 Paratrooper, Prowisor said, the road was much safer now.

I asked Omer how his unit had managed to reduce the number of attacks on the 60 Road. A combination of measures, he said: checkpoints, intelligence, raids on homes, and making the soldiers' presence known in various ways—by simply driving through villages, or by making

use of the talents of his sniper squad. When I asked what, exactly, the snipers might do, he told me this story.

A month or two before, just after his company had moved into its base (which is known as the 773 Outpost, because it sits 773 meters above sea level), reports came in that stones were being hurled at night from a nearby hill at settlers' cars traveling on the 60 Road. Omer sent a squad of camouflaged snipers out to investigate, and one night, using special optics, they caught a twenty-year-old Palestinian man from the village of Sinjil in the act. They shot him just below the knee with a high-powered rifle. Oddly enough, Omer was standing by with a military doctor, and five minutes after being shot the man was being treated by the same army that had just maimed him. An Israeli ambulance took him to a hospital in Jerusalem, where the government paid for his treatment. Part of the man's leg had to be amputated, but the point was that he was alive, and could serve as a living warning. "Every day now his village will remember what happened," Omer said.

I asked Omer whether it had been necessary to shoot the man at all. Couldn't the soldiers simply have arrested him, or given him a stern warning? Omer found my questions puzzling. From his point of view, he had acted with restraint, because "legally we could have shot him—to kill." Omer argued that the man's actions posed a lethal hazard to those riding on the 60 Road; people could have been killed. In fact, as Omer reminded me, in March of



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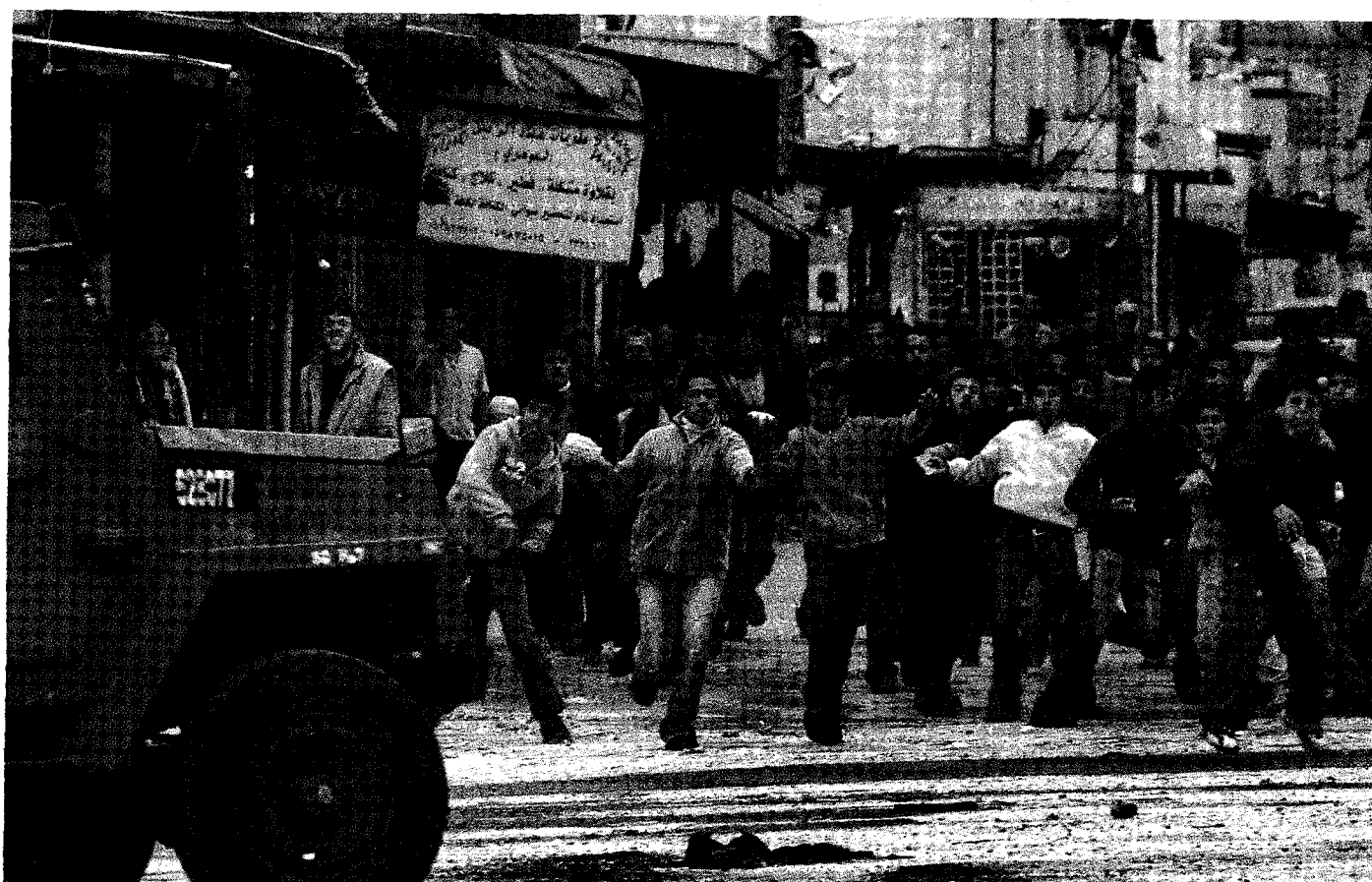
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2002, not far from where we were standing, a Palestinian sniper had opened fire on a 60 Road checkpoint known as British Police (after those who built it), killing seven Israeli soldiers and three civilians with an ancient rifle. The sniper had never been caught. British Police, which was near a stand of tall pines, was now abandoned, but the incident, like so many others in this part of the world, was far from forgotten.

At dusk one evening I went out with Omer and two of his men on a patrol of two Arab villages near the base, Sinjil and Jiljilya. Omer drove the Storm, a special armored Jeep with bulletproof windows and flatproof tires. The narrow road on which we were driving, much of it dirt, wound its way up a hill and past the simple whitewashed houses of Sinjil, the first village, where a soldier pointed out to me a wall on which a map of Israel and the West Bank had been painted—the whole of it filled in with the green, black, and white stripes of the Palestinian flag. For the soldiers this was unmistakable evidence of the Palestinians' refusal to accept Israel's right to exist, and a clear sign that we were in enemy territory.

None of the soldiers had told me what to expect, so the flying rock took me totally by surprise. With a bang it bounced off the roof of the Storm and skittered across the hood, making me jump. We had left Sinjil, traveled maybe two miles across an arid, vacant hillside, and were

Palestinian boys hurl stones at an Israeli army vehicle during clashes last year in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus

just coming into Jiljilya. I looked through the Storm's thick windows to see where the rock had come from, but nobody was in sight. On either side of the road, however, were the remains of a makeshift barricade that had been constructed by locals; once it had spanned the road, but now it was a ruin of rocks, boxes, chairs, and a television. "I think we won't go all the way in tonight," Omer said, turning the car around at the other end of the village.

Only later did I learn that Omer considered it unsafe to proceed with only one truck. That was the next evening, after I had asked whether we might go back and drive in farther. Though he couldn't come himself, Omer okayed the trip, sending me out in the Storm with Adam, an experienced driver, and Rooey, a radioman. We were followed by other soldiers in a Humvee driven by a young woman who, like about a quarter of Omer's troops, was an immigrant from Russia. The soldiers chatted to one another and to the base on their radios.

The chatter stopped when the first stone struck the Storm with a bang—once again we were passing the scattered remnants of the barricade in Jiljilya. I jumped, but Adam drove on, smiling ruefully. "Even for us the first one is always a little scary," he said. "The first one?" I said.

Then two more stones hit the Storm, while others flew

by, barely missing us. This time I saw where they were coming from—a bunch of kids behind a wall. But the soldiers ignored them, and we drove on to a third village, Abwein.

In Abwein, five minutes later, I heard a loud, shrill whistling for the first time—the signal Palestinians use to communicate that army vehicles are on the way. Another round of stones rained down on us, but our two-vehicle motorcade kept moving, neither speeding up nor slowing down, and Adam's face was expressionless.

"Why are we here, exactly?" I asked him.

"Just to show them we are here," he said, smiling darkly. In other words, I thought to myself, *intimidation*.

Soon we reached the end of the road—the army had placed a big earthen mound across it. Such strategically placed road closures (as opposed to checkpoints) are common all over the West Bank; the army uses them to restrict access to roads favored by settlers, and to increase its control over Palestinian districts like this one. We started turning around, which took a long time on the narrow street, especially for the Humvee. "You mean we have to go back the way we came?" I asked. Adam thought this question was funny.

Numerous rocks pelted the Storm over the next few minutes, and again as we neared the tumbledown barricade in Jiljilya. There was no exit from the road we were on, and the rock throwers knew we'd have to retrace our route. "Is that all they've got?" Adam muttered as we rolled slowly through the hail of stones. That was when a Coke bottle filled with engine oil smashed against the windshield and I discovered, from the patches of dark oil on my arm and pants, that the Storm's seals weren't perfectly tight. I looked back to see what the Humvee would attract and saw a Molotov cocktail explode right in front of it, drawing a straight line of flame diagonally across the road between us.

Both vehicles stopped. Adam turned on the windshield wipers of the Storm and cursed when they managed only to smear the oil. "I wish they'd hit us with the cocktail instead," he said. The Humvee began to turn around, heading back in the direction we'd just come.

"What are they going to do?" I asked Adam.

"If they can catch them, they can shoot them in the lower legs," replied Roovey, the radioman, from the back seat. From the military's perspective, throwing a Molotov cocktail is aggression of a higher order than throwing stones. Shooting to hit the lower legs is standard practice if the provocation is violent but not likely to be lethal. (There is even an Israeli children's game, like dodge ball, in which the object is to hit your opponent below the knee.) The Humvee disappeared for ten minutes as it rumbled around the back streets of Jiljilya, but then returned in our rear-view mirrors; it had failed to catch the throwers.

Back at the base Omer let his concern show more than usual. "The bottles and the rocks are normal, but the Molotov cocktails—that hasn't happened before on that

road," he told me. "It says something very serious about them, about how ready they are to attack us. Molotov cocktails really can make a car explode."

"But aren't the armored vehicles immune?" I asked.

"Well, in theory," he replied.

A day later Omer invited me to come along as he and a handful of soldiers set up a middle-of-the-night flying checkpoint along the deserted stretch of road between Sinjil and Jiljilya. It was about two A.M., very dark and very quiet. A few steps from the checkpoint we could look west to the Mediterranean and see the bright lights of Tel Aviv. It is such a small country.

There were almost no cars to be seen. But even when there's "a very low probability of actual contact with terrorist activity," Omer said, "checking a road in a random manner causes uncertainty, making it practically impossible to say when and where you can sneak out of a village without being checked." He continued, "Working in various times and places lowers the level of threat faced by our forces." When the first car finally approached the checkpoint, Omer's soldiers turned powerful spotlights on it at the last minute and appeared to scare the driver almost to death. The driver told the soldiers that he was a pharmacist returning from a late-night restocking of his shop, and he was very accommodating of their requests to search his trunk, his back seat, and under his hood. Another hour and only two cars later we headed back to the base.

**"Why are we here, exactly?"
I asked him.**

**"Just to show them we are here,"
he said, smiling darkly. In
other words, I thought to
myself, *intimidation*.**

As our service taxi passed near the now abandoned British Police checkpoint on the 60 Road, Khaldoon al-Khatib, a student at Birzeit University, just outside Ramallah, pointed it out as a landmark, just as Omer had. For him, however, the checkpoint had a different name—*Ayoon al-Haramia* ("Eyes of the Thieves")—and the massacre of the Israelis by the mystery gunman was not a tragedy but a triumph. "Even on the Palestinian side we still don't know how he did it," Khaldoon said, beaming. "It's like Spiderman!"

Traveling south on the 60 Road, I was revisiting familiar terrain, but with a tour guide so different that it seemed like another land entirely. Khaldoon's brother, Ahmed, an acquaintance of mine who is a student in Pennsylvania, had suggested that I look up Khaldoon. When I got to Ramallah and told Khaldoon of my interest in checkpoints,

he proposed that we travel south for a weekend at his parents' house in Hebron, where often a checkpoint was set up just down the street.

The twenty-two-year-old Khaldoon, slender, handsome, and hyper, was in his third year at Birzeit and studying psychology. As we rumbled south in a succession of service taxis, switching whenever a checkpoint or a barrier required it, he kept asserting that none of the checkpoints was impregnable. Show me a checkpoint, he would say, and I'll show you a way around it. The Qalandia checkpoint, between Ramallah and Jerusalem, was Exhibit No. 1: if you were willing to make a big detour and to pay about eight times the normal taxi fare, you could avoid it completely. South of Eyes of the Thieves we did just that, switching taxis at a junction called Arram and ending up in the taxi lot south of Qalandia. Our circuitous and costly route demonstrated why most Palestinians prefer to subject themselves to the checkpoint.

But in other places, Khaldoon told me, evasion was riskier. You could get around a checkpoint by taking a dirt back road or a remote footpath, but the army wasn't stupid: knowing the net had holes, they sent out patrols to catch the fish who slipped through. Every Palestinian has heard stories like the one told me by a waiter in Nablus. Returning home late in the day and finding the Hawara checkpoint closed, he hiked up Mt. Gerizim to walk around. The soldiers who caught him beat him up and held a pistol to his head. Service taxis are regularly fined or confiscated when caught detouring around a checkpoint. Khaldoon nevertheless sounded defiant. "They close a road, we find a hundred roads!" he proclaimed. "We will make more roads! Anywhere!"

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, soldiers—Israeli, Russian, and American—are learning that the hardest thing is not taking control of a territory but attempting to administer it once you are there.

I was starting to believe him when our service taxi stopped at al-Quds University, in East Jerusalem. Across the street a panoramic view of the city had been replaced by a long section of Israel's new security fence—a blank, imposing structure that ran along the edge of the school's dusty playing fields. The original plan had called for the wall to cross the fields, rendering them useless, but it was revised after Condoleezza Rice intervened. At that moment only one panel remained to be installed before the stretch of wall was complete. "You're not going to make a road around that," I commented. Khaldoon gave me an

unhappy look and said nothing more on the subject for the rest of the trip.

Outside Hebron, Khaldoon used a cell phone to alert his father, Awni al-Khatib, that he would have to pick us up downtown. But his dad called right back: traffic was so stacked up at the checkpoint near their house, he said, that it would be hours before he'd be able to get there. An alternative rendezvous was picked. As we approached the city, the taxi dropped me and Khaldoon on the side of the road. We climbed a five-foot-high earthen barrier (the army has constructed hundreds of these to restrict Palestinian access to main highways like the 60 Road) and hiked a quarter mile or so down a back street to meet Khaldoon's father.

Awni, an engaging, outgoing man in his early fifties, welcomed us into his Volkswagen Polo, where we also met his youngest son, Muhammad. We drove about ten minutes to an intersection that was in total gridlock with long lines of cars and trucks.

"Uh-oh," I said.

But Khaldoon had a different reaction. "No, no—we're home!" he exclaimed. He clambered out of the VW, threaded his way across the road through the bumper-to-bumper traffic, and opened what turned out to be the gate to the family's driveway. After about five minutes the drivers nearby were able to make enough space for the VW to squeeze through, and we pulled into the driveway. "You see what we have to put up with," Awni said, as Khaldoon closed the gate. I didn't at first, but then Khaldoon explained: those cars and trucks were all queued up for the local checkpoint, a hundred yards down the road. "When they set up the checkpoint, they don't put in enough soldiers," Khaldoon observed. "People have to wait a long time."

Awni is a scientist with a doctorate in inorganic chemistry from the University of Florida at Gainesville. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Utah State University and was a Fulbright visiting scholar at the University of Oklahoma. He has a family of six, who lived in an apartment block for years after they moved to Hebron. Awni's promotion to vice president of Hebron University had enabled them to build this gracious house, perched on a hillside on the edge of town, with a balcony, flower gardens, and commanding views of an olive orchard across the valley.

But their lives had been completely changed by the arrival of the checkpoint on their doorstep, in 2001. As Khaldoon's mother, Latifa, served us tea on a patio outside the living room, a succession of Palestinian men scrambled furtively past the gardens every few minutes, prompting wild barking from the family's German shepherd. "They're getting around the checkpoint," Khaldoon explained. They would have to run across a settler road below the house to do it, he said, and then wind through



Palestinian crowds awaiting passage through Qalandia, the checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah

the olive orchard. As long as they didn't get caught, they'd save a lot of time.

I was curious about how much time, so the next day we walked down the road to where the soldiers were. One stood guard up on an overpass, and two more were stationed below. I joined a crowd of about forty Palestinians who were waiting impatiently for the soldiers' attention. Being American, I discovered, did not speed things up. After more than half an hour, when I was finally allowed to approach him, a young soldier with red hair examined my documents and then stepped close enough to whisper in my ear that it was dangerous in town. "If I were you, I would climb up there," he confided, pointing to the settler road up the embankment, "and hitchhike out of here." I thanked him for looking out for me; he was clearly harried, and not required to enhance my safety. "But I'm with a friend," I said, pointing to Khaldoon. "I think I'll be okay." The soldier looked surprised and let us both pass.

Omer kept referring to "the old 60" and "the new 60," and one day I asked what he meant. The old 60, he explained, had connected all the major Palestinian cities of the West Bank. But with the growth of Israeli settlements in the territory, and with Israeli settlers

encountering trouble when they traveled through Palestinian cities, bypass roads had been created. The peak of this construction was in the late 1990s. Bypasses now constitute the main 60 Road, which skirts not only the cities but many of the villages as well.

One morning intelligence reports indicated that bombers out of Nablus would be heading to points south, and Omer decided to set up a flying checkpoint on the new 60 Road where it intersected with the old 60, just below the company's base. After all, a smart bomber might decide to avoid the main routes, with their permanent checkpoints, in favor of a longer journey on back roads.

Four soldiers went out at mid-morning with a Humvee driver to set up the flying checkpoint, and I went along to observe. In charge of the operation was one of Omer's most trusted platoon leaders, a twenty-one-year-old man named Ori, who unloaded from the Humvee two ammo boxes containing the *pakal machsom*, the checkpoint kit, which included reflectors, a warning sign on a tripod, and two lengths of "dragon's teeth"—collapsible spikes that extend about six feet across the road, to make sure cars stop where they are supposed to.

I had talked to Ori at length the evening before, at a picnic table on the base. Short, handsome, and conscientious, he had served two years in the army after an eight-month stint in the navy. Like many of his buddies, he was still trying to make the adjustment from his active life as

a soldier patrolling Nablus to a relatively more passive one manning checkpoints. "In Nablus you feel like a warrior," he told me. "You arrest people, you bring them to justice, and all of that. But here you don't see the fruit of the work. The challenge is the people and their problems and all the pressure they put on you, and your soldiers looking at you and trying to see how you do it. And you need to deal with the threats, which at a checkpoint are very large. The threat could be in a lady's bag, or in the engine behind an air cleaner, or behind the nearest hill, or a grenade could be thrown at you from fifty meters." As Ori spoke, I thought of his platoon's symbol: a clown juggling grenades.

The low points of his military service, Ori told me, were the three months he spent working the Hawara checkpoint and a recent dangerous assignment in Gaza. He had been sent to Gaza the day after a rocket-propelled grenade had killed five Israeli soldiers traveling in armored personnel carriers. Ori's challenge, in the middle of taking fire from snipers, was to try to retrieve the remaining small body parts of the slain soldiers, so that their relatives would have something to bury.

But today he was back at a checkpoint, battling the heat and the boredom of examining each and every document handed to him from a slow-moving line of cars. As the line began to stretch back over a hill and out of sight, much like the scene in Hebron as I had waited with Khaldoon, Ori, exposed on the blacktop, summoned one vehicle at a time to move ahead of the rest, and then spoke to the driver in the Arabic phrases he had learned during his boot-camp training.

Wain raieh? (Where are you going?)

Jai min wain? (Coming from where?)

Lahalak fi al-saiara? (Alone in the car?)

Laish raieh? Shu al-shughul? (Why are you going? On what business?)

Ifee al-saiara! (Turn off the car! [An order that is often ignored at first.]

Itla min al-saiara! (Get out of the car!)

Iftah al-sanduq! (Open the trunk!)

Irfu gameesak! (Lift up your shirt!)

All morning long I watched Ori and his colleagues do their work. I watched them stop an ambulance and make everyone get out, including an old man in back who was apparently on his way to a hospital and looked pretty close to death. Later, in their defense, Ori and other soldiers pointed out that ambulances had been used on more than one occasion to carry explosives.

I watched them allow cars with yellow-and-black Israeli license plates—as opposed to white-and-green Palestinian ones—to skip the queue and pass through the checkpoint by using the oncoming-traffic lane. Most

made eye contact with Ori before proceeding, but some just zoomed by.

I watched them make a pregnant woman wait more than twenty minutes in the broiling sun while a soldier ran her ID through a computer back at the base.

I watched them order several Palestinians to pile out of a service taxi, leaving inside an incapacitated man whose foot was wrapped with gauze through which blood had oozed ... I wondered what had happened. Ori, wary of a trap, then made the man, despite his evident pain, get out of the taxi and hop over to him with his documents. After getting the all clear the man was carried back to the taxi by the other passengers.

I watched an old woman climb out of the car she was riding in and hobble up the road, saying that her husband could pick her up once he got through the checkpoint, but she was not going to wait a minute more. "Go ahead and shoot me!" she told Ori as she walked by.

After about three hours Omer arrived and decided that although no bomber or contraband had been interdicted, the checkpoint had served its purpose. Back at the base Ori and the other soldiers seemed glad to take off their heavy combat gear and eat lunch. Ori told me that he would have liked to be a soldier in the time of the Haganah—the Israel Defense Forces' precursor—or of an early elite strike force like the Palmach. Such fighters, he said, recruited themselves, lived in a group, and worked together for one purpose. "Now it seems so complicated—you don't know who's right and who's wrong, and if we've done the right thing every time."

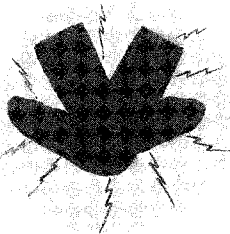
Surely this sentiment is shared by thousands of soldiers—Israeli, Russian, American—at the dawn of the twenty-first century, when it appears that the hardest thing is not taking control of a territory (the West Bank, Chechnya, Iraq) but attempting to administer it once you are there. The battlefield is no longer a highly militarized beachhead, plain, or jungle but a road, a checkpoint; and the challenge is picking out the enemy—a teenager in a long coat; a woman with a baby carriage—from the large mass of civilians, who are noncombatants, without creating additional enemies in the process. The great risk, as you contend against the unseen, is that you may come to demonize even those who are not part of the resistance. That's what the job does. No wonder Ori felt nostalgic for the old days.

And no wonder Omer, in command of a base surrounded by historical enemies, didn't seem at all fearful of traditional defeat. His side clearly enjoyed overwhelming military superiority. But Omer did worry a lot about his men's state of mind. Arriving back at the base one morning just before dawn, after a particularly difficult arrest in a house in a Palestinian village, he sat on his bunk and ruefully told me of a boy's shaking, a mother's sobbing. They had got the bad guy, he said, but the work still took its toll. He unlaced a boot. "The real daily fight," he said, worried about his soldiers, "is fighting for a soul." ■

NOT CONSPICUOUSLY INTELLIGENT DESIGN

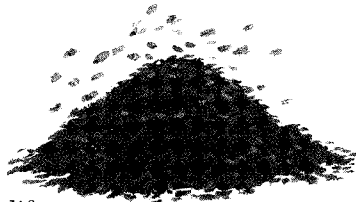
BY BRUCE MCCALL

....



SOCK STATIC

- Wastes electricity
- Purposes of mild shock unclear
- No practical applications

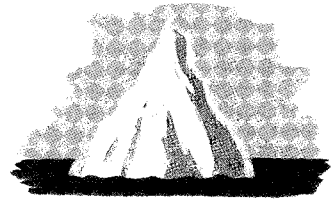


LEAVES

- Short service life
- Inefficient size; the thousands needed per tree create colossal annual disposal problems on expiration
- Redundancy rampant; all do same job of photosynthesis and transportation, yet design not even close to standardized

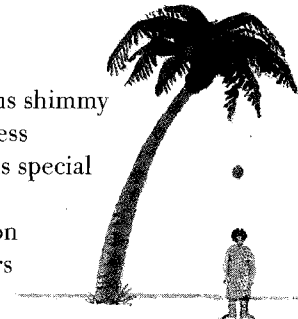
ICEBERGS

- Giant frozen-water storage units contain billions of tons of free ice, but bird droppings, walrus waste, etc. nix use in mixed drinks, fish preservation, most everyday ice functions
- Self-propelled, but no steering system; Rx for mayhem in the sea-lanes
- Concept not thought through; units melt well before reaching hot climates where ice demand is ravenous



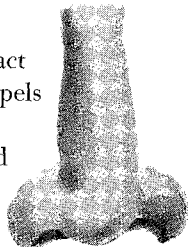
COCONUTS

- Require dangerous shimmy up high tree to access
- Hard casing needs special tools to open
- Tendency to fall on innocent bystanders



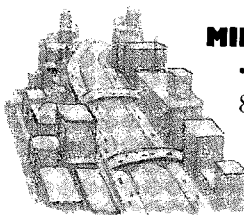
THE NOSE

- Placement in exact center of face compels unsightly public discharge of liquid waste from head



THE LOW COUNTRIES

- Almost the first rule for any country is "Be above sea level"

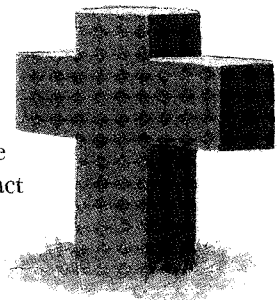


MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

- Only two big cities in a state of 80,009 square miles, yet less than half a mile apart
- Virtually identical; where's the imagination?

DEATH

- Crimps planning
- Totally one-sided decision leaves a bad taste
- After x-million years, exact function still debated

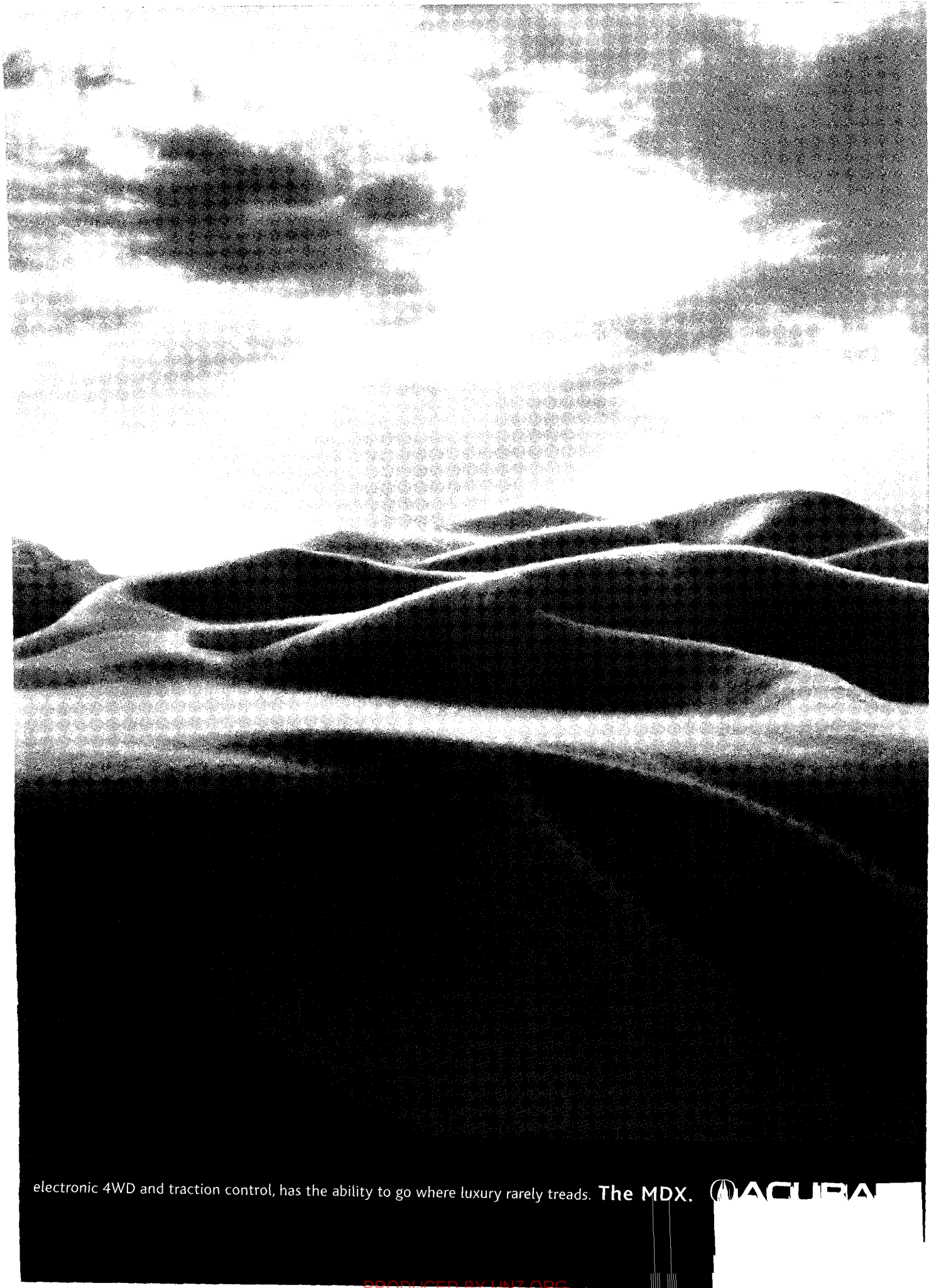




At one with both worlds. Don't be deceived by its finely sculpted lines and elegant demeanor. The Acura MDX, with

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electronic 4WD and traction control, has the ability to go where *luxury* rarely treads. The MDX.  ACURA

THE PREACHER

Bishop T. D. Jakes wants his flock not only to do good but to do well, and his brand of entrepreneurial spirituality has made him perhaps the most influential black leader in America today

BY SRIDHAR PAPPU

Photographs by Adam Buchanan

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Last November 2, in a city that had long ago lost its way and its strength and its ability to rise up, they mourned her. A half-century earlier, on a December evening in 1955, Rosa Parks had refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, and had become the catalyst for a civil-rights revolution whose iconic moments were captured forever in the grainy footage of black-and-white television. Her refusal to move sparked marches by demonstrators and, in response, violent reprisals by white policemen and others. As a consequence, America was finally moved to begin to address in a serious way the corrosive problems of race at the nation's core. Rosa Parks had been a seamstress before becoming a symbol, and her actions gave powerful emotional impetus to the efforts of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Medgar Evers, John Lewis and Whitney Young Jr. But now, in her ninety-second year, Parks was dead, and an entire era of the civil-rights movement seemed to be going to its grave with her.

Barbara Tuchman, in her book *The Guns of August*, describes the elaborate funeral of England's King Edward VII, in 1910, when the crowned heads of Europe gathered peacefully for one last time before the world was changed utterly by the onset of war. And so it was, in its way, at the Greater Grace Temple, in Detroit, where 4,000 people assembled inside for the funeral service, and thousands more held vigil outside. Within the temple you would have seen Louis Farrakhan and Al Sharpton side by side, and you would have seen most of the rest of America's black leadership—people like Congressmen John Conyers and Danny Davis and Senator Barack Obama. There were a lot of white faces there, too—Bill and Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. You would have heard remarks from the pulpit by Joseph E. Lowery, the former head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and a thundering solo by Aretha Franklin. You would have heard from Bernice King, one of the four children of Martin Luther King. The service lasted for seven hours.

Jesse Jackson reminded those in the pews that "some people's lives are worthy of taking the time to say goodbye."

Sitting on the podium with Jackson during the service was a black preacher from Dallas named Thomas Dexter Jakes. T. D. Jakes, as he is popularly called, had visited with Parks a few years before, at her home in Detroit, and now here he was, given a place of honor with Jackson, who for some decades has been the unofficial and presumptive inheritor of King's mantle. And although his own remarks were brief—Jakes spoke of how much he and his generation owed to Parks—make no mistake: this is where Jakes belonged. He, too, is inheriting a mantle, very possibly the same one worn by Jackson.

T. D. Jakes, forty-eight, a child of the civil-rights movement, both epitomizes and stands at the front of a new generation of black leadership. His methods are not those of the 1950s or 1960s, the methods of political organizing or civil disobedience or black power. He has, rather, built a 30,000-member nondenominational church, called the Potter's House, in the Pentecostal tradition, and alongside this church he has built a lucrative multimedia empire, TDJ Enterprises, that produces books and DVDs and a variety of other faith-based products, all of which has made Jakes a multimillionaire. Under the auspices of his church he holds "conferences" that are more like revival meetings—hundreds of thousands of people annually flock to arenas across the country to hear his message about finding the path toward self-healing and economic empowerment, and about how only Jesus can provide the strength to go down that path and to cope with the issues that arise when you do so.

Unlike black leaders such as Jackson and Obama, who are Democrats, or Condoleezza Rice and Alan Keyes, who are Republicans, Jakes is without political affiliation, and thus has the ability to straddle both Left and Right ("I've never seen an eagle that can soar on one wing," he likes to point out). Several hundred prisons in more than half of the states have satellite links tuned to Jakes's inspirational

Sridhar Pappu is an Atlantic correspondent. His last piece, on Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, appeared in the September issue.



programming. Meanwhile, his international outreach is growing, spearheaded by a television presence in Europe, Australia, and especially Africa, where he has also invested heavily in schools and medical facilities, and in digging wells to provide fresh drinking water. Given his influence and reputation, it is not surprising that he has been sought out and asked to stand with both Bill Clinton (in the aftermath of the Monica Lewinsky scandal) and George W. Bush (in the wake of Hurricane Katrina) when those presidents needed a black man of God at their side.

Jakes is an imposing presence: bald, six feet two inches tall, and with a nineteen-inch neck. He sports a white goatee and custom-made suits. In private conversations his voice drops to a near-whisper. He stretches out his words with a strong country contour, pronouncing, for instance, "Kenya" as "Keen-ya." He is a man of means: he arrives at church in a Lexus or a Bentley and keeps up with his speaking obligations, which are numerous, by means of a private plane, a Lockheed JetStar II. He is always on the move—"I'm on the clock," you'll hear him say, "I'm on the clock"—because he seems to be the one man who unites the many worlds of America's far-from-monolithic black community, from the well-off professionals in Chicago's

Gold Coast to the desperate refugees from New Orleans, fleeing for their lives. T. D. Jakes may be far from a household name in white America, but he was sitting with Jesse Jackson at Rosa Parks's funeral because he is very much a household name among this country's African-Americans. Indeed, he is fast becoming what Jackson no longer is: the most powerful black man in America.

Such a statement speaks to the nature of power itself—the will to act, and the ability to make that will a reality. Men like Al Sharpton can walk through New York City streets with bullhorns calling for racial justice. Colin Powell and Vernon Jordan can sit on the executive boards of Fortune 500 companies. What T. D. Jakes possesses is a unique ability to bring affluent white and black Americans to his parishioners, persuading them to sponsor events like the annual "MegaFest," a three-day religious extravaganza that attracts more than 150,000 people to Atlanta. Jakes's efforts have elicited historical comparisons, most notably to Billy Graham, whose nonpartisan stance won him the trust of all sectors of the power elite. Thus, when it came time for the Bush-Clinton Katrina Relief Fund to distribute money to religious organizations, it was Jakes (together with former Congressman William Gray) whom

former Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush Sr. chose to disburse the \$20 million in aid.

The African-American radio host Tom Joyner, whose show reaches 8 million people and is broadcast on 110 stations, may speak to more American blacks on a regular basis than Jakes does, but he bows to Jakes when it comes to actual influence. "If you're an African-American anywhere in this country," he says, "the chances are you've been touched by at least one level of his vast ministry."

"I don't know a lot of African-American leaders who can go into what used to be called the Superdome and draw 50,000 people," said longtime Maryland Congressman Elijah Cummings when I asked him to rank Jakes with other black power brokers. "I don't know too many African-American ministers who can go into a foreign land and draw hundreds of thousands of people, as he did in Kenya."

"When I watch T. D. Jakes," Cummings went on, "it makes me go and work harder in my job, because he is good at what he does, and you know that he has been anointed to preach. You just know it."

Jakes's Pentecostal church, the Potter's House, cuts across class lines and gathers people of all socio-economic strata. It does this through a common emphasis on personal betterment—moving from one level to the next.

You can get a sense of the "it" just by being wherever Jakes is present. You certainly would have gotten a sense of it on a warm October evening in Dallas, when he was unexpectedly maneuvered into speaking to a group in a private home. He and his wife, Serita Ann, had come to a formal dinner party in a large house on the edge of Dallas's old-money bastion, Highland Park. Jakes had come as a favor to one of his publicists, who had wanted him to meet the host, a noted legal scholar, and Jakes had brought a crystal platter from Tiffany's as a gift. For Jakes, a man already of considerable standing in Dallas, this was a chance to make further inroads among people of means and influence in the white community, people who one day might be able to assist the work of the Potter's House. Now, after two hours of eating and sipping Diet Coke (Jakes doesn't drink), he found himself with his back to the door, facing an all-white audience that wanted to hear what this oracle had to say.

Anyone who has seen him preach will have an indelible image of his theatrical sermons, with Jakes hopping around the stage, drenched in sweat, his voice rising to provoke the rapturous thousands around him. But in this Dallas foyer he was a different kind of person, engaging in modulated conversation, listening attentively, nodding, giving quiet, thoughtful replies. He spoke to one man about

China and the global economy. He listened as one woman suggested that New Orleans not be rebuilt because "the whole thing's going to happen again," and politely shifted the discussion to the tragedy itself. He went on to talk about Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, about poverty in America and overseas, about the prospects for economic development in nearby Fort Worth (where he himself owns a home worth \$5 million). He spoke about his recent meetings with Bill Clinton and global economic leaders, telling them what he had learned.

In a nearby room a number of other guests had been watching the World Series, in which a Texas team (the Houston Astros) was playing, but as Jakes continued to talk, small pockets of these sports fans drifted away from the game and toward the preacher. One of the guests, looking back at the growing knot of people around Jakes, said to me, "When T. D. Jakes came to town, nobody knew what to think of him. In Dallas we do churches big—I belong to one that's six thousand people, and that's nothing compared to him. He's dwarfed them all."

In the process of redefining, and dominating, the religious hierarchy of Dallas, Jakes has won some high-profile followers. In 1996, Carolyn Chambers Sanders, then the wife of Dallas Cowboys defensive back Deion Sanders, decided that her loose-living husband needed a mature male influence. For a decade Deion had run roughshod over the National Football League as the game's most feared kick returner and defensive back, a man who'd danced his way to Super Bowl championships for two different teams. But however successful he was on the field, Deion's skills as a husband—as a man, really—needed help. His lifestyle was out of control. Help could not come from his biological father or his stepfather, who were dead. Carolyn decided that it could come from Jakes, who had just moved to Dallas from West Virginia.

Carolyn and Deion went to Jakes for marriage counseling, at Carolyn's behest, and Deion found in Jakes and his church a father figure and a spiritual home. Deion took in everything that Jakes and the Potter's House had to offer—the Wednesday-night Bible classes; the loud, overgrown services; the one-on-one personal sessions in which Jakes encouraged Sanders to put aside his hedonistic ways for his own sake—and began to spend more and more of his time in the confines of the Dallas church. He embraced the ideals of righteous self-empowerment that Jakes tried to instill in his congregation. In the end, Sanders's marriage did not endure, but his way of life was turned around. "The ministry was like a life raft, and it saved me," Sanders explains. For him, the Jakes connection has remained durable. It would be Jakes who, in 1999, officiated at Sanders's second wedding, to the New York actress and model Pilar Biggers, in the Bahamas.



What is it that has drawn Deion Sanders and millions of others to T. D. Jakes? The place to start looking is probably on the life raft itself: at Jakes's church, a large white structure with all the haunting spiritual resonance of a Maine outlet mall, sprawling across fifty acres in southwest Dallas. On Sunday mornings the Potter's House attracts a long stream of snaking traffic that evokes the triumphant ending of *Field of Dreams*. After parking according to a system designed by the person who helps the NFL with its own traffic problems, a visitor is greeted by men in black fatigues with the word "Amen" emblazoned on the chest. The interior of the Potter's House looks less like a sanctuary than like a Broadway theater: 7,500 people can fit into its lower level and balcony. And the pulpit is a stage, really, flanked by two JumboTrons and backed by an imposing 200-person choir that stands above a nine-foot-high recreation of Jerusalem's Wailing Wall. Every Sunday the sanctuary fills to capacity—twice. The choir warms up the congregation until the arrival of Jakes, who almost always is accompanied by Serita Ann. He begins with mundane announcements of church news (the fitness center is now accepting new members; the upcoming men's retreat will include both spa services and a golf tournament), usually delivered from the pulpit, but he then steps down to the floor like a Vegas showman. He moves into a full-throated sermon, in which he summons the witness of Scripture and the testimony of his own life. He voices shortcomings and fears and hopes and doubts, and he calls

for self-betterment, sometimes shouting and sometimes speaking softly. Men and women rise, seized with religious fervor. Some come near the stage, almost dancing in excitement. Dozens of emotional new members, cheeks wet with tears, come forward to be received by Jakes's pastors.

"It is time for the baby to move to the next level," Jakes proclaimed as he looked out at the stream of followers one Sunday when I was in attendance. "Remember that the womb is supporting the baby; it's the baby's time to move to the next level. I'm talking about the power of vision. *The power of vision!*"

"If you have not seen God the way you should see Him, right now you should repent of your small-minded concept of who He is. You should repent and get an inner vision of your own needs and limitations. Or if you've been so stuck on your own needs and limitations that you fail to see the global, bigger picture of how God can use you in spite of those limitations, then look out for where you are. I want you to bow your heads, and whatever level this message spoke to you on, I want you to respond to God on that level so that you can say, 'Here am I. Send me.'"

There is, of course, more to the church than this emotional crescendo, much more: ministries for singles and couples, for young people and prisoners and ex-prisoners and recovering drug addicts and prostitutes. There are programs and seminars on personal finance geared to every social class. Although these are open to anyone, for

the burgeoning black middle and upper classes, who are coping with new social and financial pressures, and also with the psychological burden of having made it when others in the black community haven't, the church offers a wide range of programs that seem particularly appropriate. These include a "Doing Business in Deep Waters" cruise to Alaska, and the well-known Atlanta MegaFest, where religious programs are interspersed with appearances by people like the financial guru Suze Orman and the comedian Steve Harvey.

Like Jakes, the Potter's House is standing on the shoulders of the 1960s-era crusade for civil rights. Its agenda isn't about rights per se, a battle that has been, if not won, then joined; rather, it represents something new in the black community. Although it continues to serve the needs of the dispossessed, it is just as interested in the very different concerns of the affluent. It cuts across class lines and gathers blacks of all socio-economic strata, functioning in the black community the way the class-transcending Catholic Church has always done in America. In the case of the Potter's House, it does this through a common emphasis on personal betterment—moving from one level to the next. The white megachurches that began to spring up in the 1980s, and are now a fixture all over America, have widely been seen as a response to the rootless geographical mobility of the sprawling white suburbs. The Potter's House is a megachurch, too, but it represents a response to something very different—to the challenges presented to the black community by *social* mobility, either when it fails to occur (as among the poor) or when it occurs rapidly and disconcertingly (as among the middle class).

The roots of the Potter's House can be traced back a hundred years to a black Pentecostal movement that arose in America from a church located at 312 Azusa Street, in a multiracial district of Los Angeles, and from the words of its black pastor, William Seymour. Seymour had traveled the country, listening to and learning from white ministers. (One of them—indeed, his mentor—was a racist named Charles F. Parham, a Pentecostal preacher whom he met in Houston and who enforced the conventions of segregation by allowing Seymour to hear his lectures—but only if he listened from outside the door.) Seymour urged his followers to connect with Scripture in a deeply intimate way, as the apostles had on the day of the Pentecost, when "a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind." Seymour offered a spiritual vision embracing all nations and peoples, whose direct connection with the divine would be manifested through speaking in tongues.

Today Pentecostalism is the world's fastest-growing religion within the Christian faith, with an estimated 500 million adherents around the globe. The membership is drawn from all races and from all Christian denominations. Among poor blacks worldwide, who may chafe from the legacy of colonial churches brought by white missionaries,

Pentecostalism offers a theology that is more emotionally and experientially based and a liturgy that accommodates local rites, rituals, and traditions. Pentecostalism is by definition a grassroots movement, without an encompassing hierarchical structure. (But there are networks of affiliation: Jakes was named a bishop in 1987 by the Board of Bishops of the Greater Emmanuel Pentecostal Churches.) At the Potter's House, one discovers Baptists and Catholics and Methodists and Episcopalians.

Jakes regards his own conversion, as he explained one morning during a chat in the sanctuary, to have been a matter of providence. It was a Saturday, and Jakes, whom on other occasions I had always seen in an expensive suit, was wearing a windbreaker and jeans and cowboy boots. The previous night he'd come in from Arizona, and the next day he would fly out to Australia. Jakes stretched out his legs and seemed completely at ease.

"At the time I moved from the Baptist Church to the Pentecostal Church I was about sixteen years old," Jakes said. "My father had died, something was missing out of my life, and I was not fulfilled in my spirituality where I was.

"The reason why I say it was destiny is because it was during this time that the charismatic Pentecostal movement was exploding in this country. And with that explosion came a multicultural interdenominational ideology. The megachurch is a place where Baptists and Methodists and Pentecostals intersect. And had I stayed in a mainline denomination, I would have missed that intersection. For the role that I was supposed to play globally, I couldn't be owned by a particular denomination, or be narrow in my perspectives or focus."

That may seem to some like a grandiose interpretation; it calls to mind the observation that the message of Jesus succeeded because it coincided with the fruitful conditions created by the Roman Empire. But there is a large element of simple truth in Jakes's assessment.

The youngest of three children, Thomas Dexter Jakes was born in 1957 to working-class parents in South Charleston, West Virginia. His father, Ernest L. Jakes Sr., a native of Mississippi, owned a janitorial business. His mother, Odith, who studied with Coretta Scott King at Lincoln High School, in Alabama, was a schoolteacher. Odith would help her children get to know the works of African-American poets and writers like Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, and she raised them to take seriously the prospect of the Kingdom of God.

In 1973, after years of suffering, Ernest Jakes succumbed to a kidney ailment. T.D., a teenager, and for years the only child at home to tend his father, was distraught. He dropped out of high school his senior year to care for his ailing mother, earned a GED, then enrolled at West Virginia State only to drop out after a year or so. He went to work as a processor of oxygen and acetylene at a chemical

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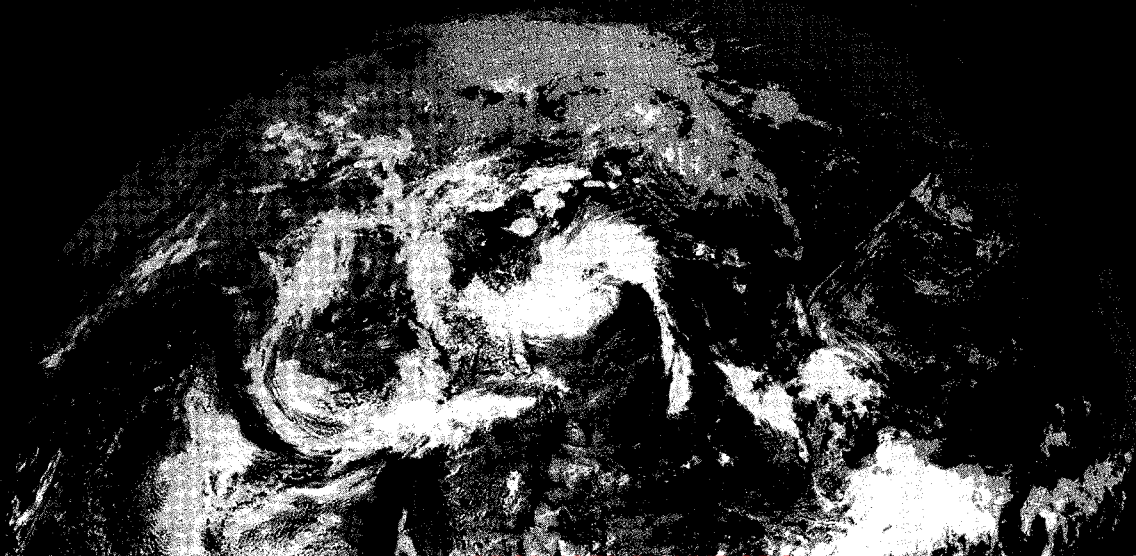
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plant in Charleston, owned by Union Carbide, a job that he assumed would give him the kind of middle-class life that so many of his parents' friends had achieved. But this way of life, which had sustained so many northern black Americans since the end of World War II, was coming to an end, as manufacturing jobs in what was already being called the Rust Belt began to disappear.

Jakes did not see that change coming. But even as he worked his day job he began exploring another path. His religious impulses had never atrophied; indeed, he had begun to preach at nineteen. He did not need reminding that there was more to life than Union Carbide, and he possessed an innate confidence—derived from having had to care for and serve as an advocate for his father—in his ability to talk to older people about things that matter. In 1980 Jakes opened his first storefront church, called the Greater Emmanuel Temple of Faith, in Montgomery, West Virginia, about thirty miles southeast of the state capital, Charleston. At his first service, he spoke to an audience of literally ten, swelled by the presence of his sister and mother. As a Pentecostal minister he did not need a divinity degree, simply a license from the state's Pentecostal Association. He donned long robes when he preached, and he wrapped a towel around his neck to absorb the perspiration.

Jakes, unlike some African-American leaders, is without political affiliation, and thus has the ability to straddle both Left and Right.

"I've never seen an eagle that can soar on one wing," he likes to point out.

It didn't take long for Jakes to be noticed; because of his distinctive and fluent sermons, word of mouth began drawing the multitudes. The head of the Pentecostal Association invited him to travel and speak throughout West Virginia, and Jakes honed his message about how to overcome self-loathing and self-doubt. He attracted large crowds—and the attention of Serita Ann Jamison, the daughter of a coal miner who lived in Alpoca, in the northeast part of the state. Before long Jakes was a husband and the father of twins (the couple now have five children, the youngest of whom is eleven). Then, in 1982, Union Carbide sold one of its Charleston plants, and Jakes was out of work.

"We lost everything," Jakes recalls. "And it was a real fight to get back up. I'm glad it happened, from the standpoint that I can relate to extremely poor people. I was literally cutting grass and digging ditches, trying to get diapers for my kids. So when I go into a home of somebody who doesn't have lights on, I've been there. I know what it is to get government milk."

Jakes's sudden financial fall would become a moment of intellectual and religious definition. In practical terms, it also made him realize that he had better start getting more creative about his livelihood and diversifying his income. The ministry would now become, and remain, Jakes's main focus, but he was open as well to business opportunities of various kinds. He did not want to be living off the contributions of his congregation, most of whom were just scraping by.

Our culture expects preachers to be poor, or at least to be of no more than modest means. Scripture itself gives sanction to this idea. And Jakes might have remained that kind of preacher had it not been for a particular Sunday-school class he taught in 1991. Jakes had become increasingly concerned about the issues so many women faced: the drugs, the unreliable husbands, the sexual abuse, the overt misogyny. So on that fateful Sunday he decided to hold a special service to speak just to women. The service—in which he acknowledged and confronted the victimization of women, but also held out a vision of empowerment and personal resurrection—left a deep impression, and word of it spread. Soon women were coming from hundreds of miles away, and Jakes himself was invited to travel long distances—to Kansas, to Oklahoma, to Georgia—and bring his famous sermon with him. Speaking at a televised revival

in Oklahoma, Jakes caught the eye of Paul Crouch, the head of the far-flung Trinity Broadcast Network, a Christian organization, and within a year Jakes began appearing regularly on television.

Commercially, though, the real breakthrough came in 1993, when Jakes used the family savings—some \$15,000—to publish a book called *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*, which put into print everything he'd been preaching about. The book combined quotations from Scripture (the title itself comes from a passage in the Gospel of Luke, in which

Jesus brings the balm of relief to a troubled woman) and large amounts of practical advice. Jakes describes God as "the perfect husband" who "wants to make sweet love to you," adding: "I'm not being carnal. I'm being real." The self-published book, which initially sold for \$10, went through printing after printing, and eventually sold more than 2 million copies, giving Jakes and his family a measure of financial independence. So fundamental is *Woman, Thou Art Loosed* to the Jakes ministry that everyone in his circle now simply uses the shorthand "WTAL."

Jakes moved his ministry from the original storefront in Montgomery to a theater in Smithers and then, in 1990, to an old bank building in Cross Lanes, which could accommodate hundreds of worshippers. He also began dabbling in real estate, and turned out to be good at it. As his preaching and publishing became more visible, so did certain aspects of his evolving lifestyle. Perhaps inevitably, Jakes found himself the target of the state's largest newspaper, *The Charleston Gazette*, edited by a self-avowed agnostic



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named James Haught. Haught saw Jakes as a “young guy caught up in the preaching business” who was “cashing in.” *The Gazette* ran a front-page story highlighting the seven-bedroom house Jakes had bought in 1994 for \$630,000. The property, paid for with the proceeds of *Woman, Thou Art Loosed*, had tennis courts and a swimming pool. The home conveniently symbolized the startlingly rapid expansion of Jakes’s preaching enterprise as a whole, with its books and TV shows and conferences around the country that attracted vast throngs. West Virginia is not a racially diverse state—as of the last census only about 3 percent of the population was black—and the emergence of a figure like Jakes caused a certain amount of discomfort and suspicion.

“I never will forget when [members of the press] came to my house with the camera, and I opened up the door and the reporter said, ‘Do your members know you live like this?’ And I stood there a minute stunned, and I said, ‘They should. They were over here last Saturday.’ You know? I had had a big open house, and all the deacons were swimming in the pool and were playing on the basketball court. It wasn’t like they were discovering a secret. But it was a discovery to *them*.”

“I was successful, which was viewed as wrong in a poor state. And I was black? And I was a preacher? Oh, it was like, ‘Lunch, boys! Come and eat! Dinner is served!’ They were having me for dinner, and I didn’t even know I was on the menu.”



So there was undeniably a push factor pointing Jakes toward Dallas, where he moved in 1996. There was also a pull factor: Dallas was one of the cities where Jakes had held his conferences—elaborate, multiday gatherings with titles like “ManPower” and “When Shepherds Bleed.” During this time he received a call from a colleague in Dallas, drawing his attention to a 5,000-seat megachurch that was suddenly for sale, tucked into the bucolic hills of southwest Dallas. It had been the property of a televangelist named W. V. Grant, who had a nasty habit of committing fraud and not paying his taxes. That church (which Jakes bought in 1996 for \$3.2 million), together with the larger community of Dallas, would provide Jakes with the kind of base he needed. Jakes called his church the Potter’s House, a new name for a new place, referring to a passage from the Book of Jeremiah (“Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel”). Dallas had a sizeable population of African-Americans (most recent figures show that they make up about a quarter of the city’s more than 1 million people),

and although many of them were poor (blacks in the city have a median household income about half that of whites), the city was also home to a large black middle class, and its members had things on their minds that white Americans scarcely register.

Today only 1.5 percent of African-Americans over twenty-five have annual incomes above \$100,000 (the figure for whites is 4.4 percent), the proportion of what Jakes calls this “minority within a minority” is growing.

When Jakes and I spoke about upwardly mobile African-Americans, in general, he explained the dilemma facing particular individuals: “He’s just arrived, you know? He’s the first generation into a suburb, or he’s the first generation—or maybe at the most second generation—with a degree. He’s upwardly mobile. He’s got a community that has people below him who have needs—endless needs. And he wants to respond to those needs. At the same time he’s trying to get membership to the country club. He’s too black often to fit into the white circles. But he’s too successful to be accepted in the traditional black environment. And often they end up stressed out, overworked. A lot of upwardly mobile African-Americans use the church as a support base. It is giving a motivational message that says, ‘You can make it, everybody.’ It says, ‘You have issues, too.’ It’s a place where you’re embraced.”

What the church does not embrace is politics. To be sure, Jakes forged strong ties with the Dallas political leadership, and with a (Republican) governor who in 2001 would go on to become president of the United States. But politically charged topics like same-sex marriage and abortion are not big issues at the Potter's House. Last November Jakes spurned Louis Farrakhan's call to join in the recent (and tepid) reprise of the Million Man March; his relations with Jesse Jackson are cordial but not politically close. Although the Potter's House has received some federal money through the Bush administration's faith-based initiative, and has participated in voter-registration drives, it has never endorsed candidates or handed down any directive on political issues. Instead, Jakes seems to keep his attention focused on the economic and spiritual development of all people, while encouraging those individuals to make political decisions for themselves. If he has political messages to deliver, he does it behind closed doors.

He talked about this issue of political involvement one day last fall at Princeton University during a public conversation under the rubric "Preachers, Profits, and the Prophetic: The New Face of American Evangelicalism." His conversation partner at the University Chapel, where Martin Luther King once spoke, was the professor/activist/rapper Cornel West, formerly a sharp critic of Jakes—West said on one occasion that Jakes lacked "political courage"—but now a friend, the rapprochement forged over the course of a lengthy dinner one night in Dallas (they spoke for three hours before even ordering salad, the two recalled). On the dais, Jakes and West sat in comfortable black rocking chairs, the pair of them representing physical opposites: the commanding, shiny-domed, easygoing Jakes; the wiry, wild-haired, and tightly wound West. The discussion soon took up politics.

"You get more King-like every minute," West said to Jakes, but then continued. "Let me ask you: What would be the conditions under which you would imagine your ministry to be in a fundamental confrontation with the powers that be—the White House, Wall Street?"

"I guess the question for me really is: Is all confrontation public?" Jakes replied. And he went on: "Because I find even in my own leadership style—for me, I respond better when you come to see me than if you just write a [public letter]. You can come and sit down with me and say, 'You know, there might be a better way of doing that. Look at this and look at that.' And bring about the right change in how I do things. Now you won't get the credit, because you don't do it in public."

Jakes's unwillingness to play the political card was evident during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when he was one of the few black leaders who did not come forward with stinging criticism of President Bush. (The rapper Kanye West, for instance, during a telethon to raise money for the hurricane's victims, said bluntly, "George

Bush doesn't care about black people.") Instead, Jakes met publicly with the president in Baton Rouge, an encounter that, whatever else it did, allowed Bush to use Jakes as a political fig leaf—though it should be said that the Potter's House's record in Katrina relief efforts has been exemplary. Deploying nearly all of the church's 360 employees and thousands of volunteers, Jakes set up hot lines for refugees, shipped supplies to the needy, and raised nearly \$3 million to help settle homeless New Orleans residents in apartments in Dallas. But Jakes raised the hackles even of his own ardent parishioners when he appeared alongside President Bush. Jakes gamely rejects the criticism.

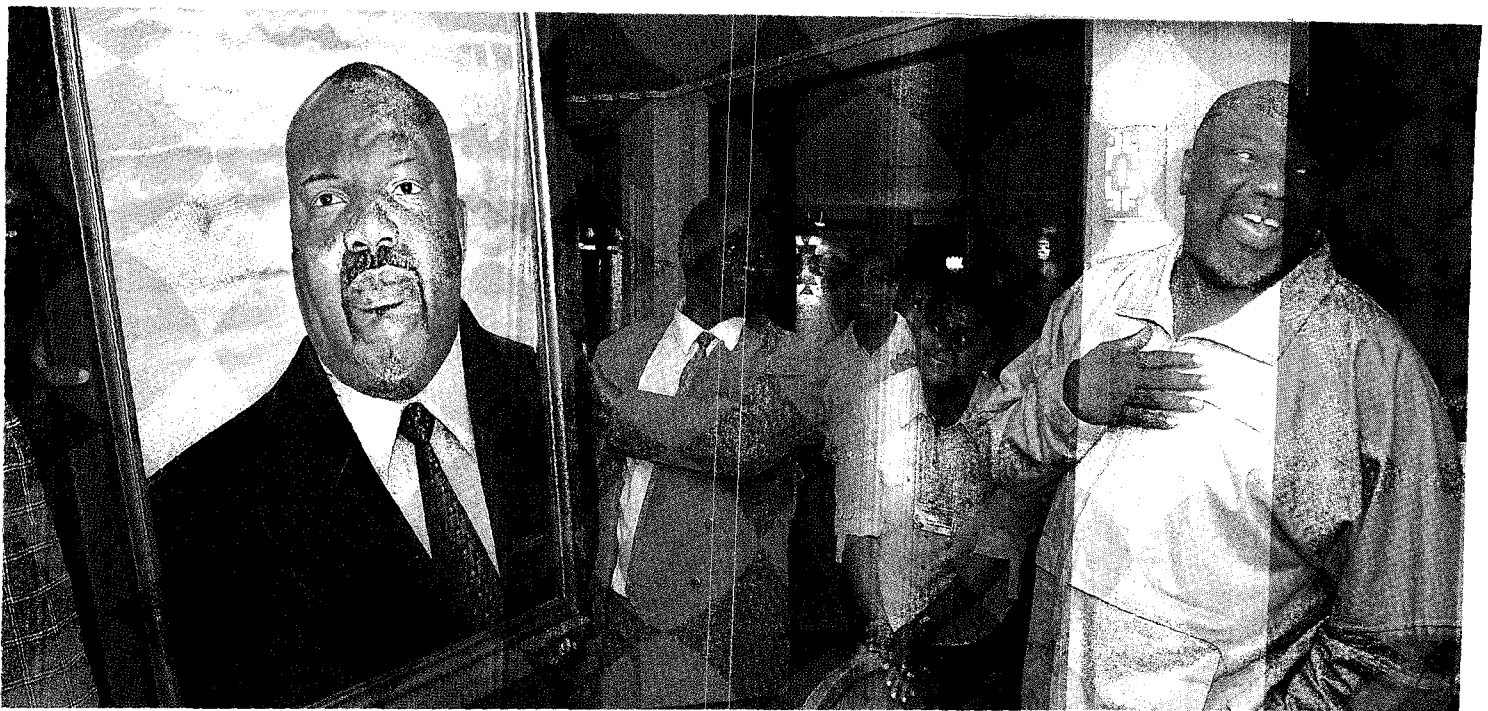
"My grandmother is from Mississippi," he explains. "My father is buried in Mississippi. My mother is in Alabama. And those are my relatives down there on top of the roof, okay? I have a choice between going and getting with a group of African-American leaders and screaming into a microphone, 'Mister President! You need to do something about poor people!' Or I get to fly down there and meet with him and say to him, 'Mister President, you need to do something about these poor people. What can be done?'"

"Which is more effective? To scream into a mic or whisper in his ear? And to be able to whisper in his ear and say, 'Mister President'—not just, 'You need to do something about poor people'—but I want to say, 'There are thousands of people that you're not being told about, that are not in a shelter, that are living in their houses with their relatives all over Dallas and all over Houston. I've got members, Mister President, all over my church, who are about to lose their apartment because they've got thirty people staying in a two-bedroom apartment. And this girl works for Rite Aid. You know? And she's now trying to feed thirty people every day, because all of her relatives have moved into her house because they're flooded out. And they're not on FEMA's radar screen.'"

"I was about trying to find solutions to the problem. Now that's important."

People who set out to change the world are not quite like the rest of us. For someone like Jakes, everyone from a beleaguered president in the White House to a malnourished boy in a shantytown is tugging at his cuffs.

The growth of the Potter's House has been relentless. Some 1,500 worshippers turned up for Jakes's first service there. And they kept on coming. The Potter's House eventually spent millions widening the roads to accommodate the traffic. In time, Jakes would spend \$45 million to build a new sanctuary. Now even more ambitious plans are afoot. On 200 acres south of Dallas, Jakes is



constructing a red-brick, Harvardsque building to house his Christian prep school called Clay Academy—the “clay” here refers to what “the potter” works with—which in turn will form the nucleus of a planned community of 1,500 households, with housing for the low-income as well as the affluent. More than a bedroom community, it will become the hub—albeit a Christian hub, and a predominantly black Christian hub—of southwest Dallas.

The worldly success, as one might put it, of the Potter’s House as an organization is resonant with Jakes’s emphasis on the worldly self-betterment of its members. This message is not without its critics. Those who still believe in the old guard, including Cornel West before that momentous dinner, have likened Jakes to figures like Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan—people who undeniably induce a level of excitement but who shun controversy because they have too much to lose. Recently Shayne Lee, a sociologist at Tulane University and the author of *T. D. Jakes: America’s New Preacher*, told me, “He’s turned spirituality into a commodity. Materialism is the car that drives him. His whole message of materialism does not sit well with the Gospel, and that’s what I find problematic.”

Jakes would argue that what is really problematic is the absence of a self-betterment or entrepreneurial ethic among many black Americans. And his ambitions for this message go far beyond Dallas and even America—they extend, for instance, to Africa, where his brand of nondenominational, Pentecostal Christianity is growing as rapidly as it is elsewhere in the world. Jakes’s publishing and broadcasting inroads in Africa are deep, and he has a wide personal acquaintance with African religious and political leaders. Jakes’s thrust toward Africa has a twofold motivation.

First, he wants to make connections with a population that, according to census data, is finding its way into the United States every year in greater numbers than during the

height of the slave trade (some 50,000 legal African immigrants have been admitted annually since 1990). Many of these hard-driving people share Jakes’s bootstrap vision of self-advancement. They have also never shouldered the historical legacy of slavery, and are thus, in Jakes’s view, psychologically distinct from the larger black community in America. The difference, which is an increasing source of intramural tension, was brought home to Jakes starkly during a cab ride one day in Baltimore in the mid-nineties. The cabbie was African, and in the course of a conversation the preacher, never one not to speak his mind, told the driver that he had never really connected with African people, that he just didn’t understand them, that they came across as arrogant. Turning to Jakes, the man said, “We are not arrogant. We are what you would have been had you not been slaves.”

Second, like many African-Americans, Jakes feels the pull of ancestry, the pull of identity. “One thing you have to understand is that the African-American soul is wounded,” Jakes says. “And for us, slavery was like the molestation of a nationality of people. Molestation to me is a good metaphor because it speaks to the person in power taking advantage of the person who had no power. Even though that has passed, there is a scar that remains. And to expect our community to be over it is like molesting somebody from the time they’re five years old to when they’re fifteen, and then meeting them at eighteen or twenty years old and saying, ‘You should be over it!’ Well, no. That’s part of my life, I can’t get over it. And with it comes the loss of your name—inheriting the name of somebody who owned you. At some time you question, ‘Who am I?’”

In the last two years alone the Potter’s House has invested more than \$1 million in development projects in Africa, focusing, for the moment, on Kenya. Jakes does not do things in a small way. He arrived in Nairobi last September for his “Faith for Africa” mission with a party of some 400,

including other pastors and their spouses, people from various denominations and those associated with him in Dallas or elsewhere in America (as well as a 140-person choir). Mostly middle aged and middle class, they carried hand sanitizer and bottled water nearly everywhere, traveled in groups, and generally refrained from eating outside their hotel. Jakes's security team—men and women in khaki, with dark glasses and coiled earpieces—was never far away. Jakes intended to show his fellow believers what real poverty looks like when it exists on a systemic national level, and also to foster the development of a network of like-minded indigenous pastors in Kenya. In addition, he hoped to encourage or jump-start more grassroots development projects.

Jakes's progress through Kenya had all the trappings of an American-style evangelical crusade—the gospel choir, the weeping throngs, the insistence that a better day would come—and it had been planned by his own team of advance personnel (the Potter's House staff includes a "Transportation Ministry"). He worked the crusade on both the wholesale and retail level. In Nairobi's Uhuru Park, he held a service and led a rally for nearly a million people—as many as had shown up to see Pope John Paul II in May 1980. But much of his time was spent with small groups. He spoke to a gathering of Kenyan pastors about the pressures, the weight, of trying to carry a congregation. At the Hilton Nairobi one evening he urged business leaders to embrace entrepreneurship, and held up his own vocation as a businessman as an essential complement to his preaching work, because the word of God alone wasn't going to raise people out of poverty. He toured a slum neighborhood where the Potter's House had built a well, and led a group of his fellow visitors down to the sewage-filled stream that had been the previous source of water. "Jesus," Jakes said under his breath.

The trip was filled with talk of brotherhood, of the family coming together, all rendered in a colorful montage of dress and dance and music. But there was a darker undercurrent, a more troubling understanding: when you go looking for your heritage, your roots, sometimes you don't like what you see. At a Masai village, many hours from the capital, Jakes and his wife were given the title of honorary elders. (They were also given a live bull.) At one point we watched as children began to perform a play. In the performance, boys play elders who solve a disagreement by arranging the marriage of a very young girl to a very old man. The girl in the play begins to cry, because she is so young, but that doesn't last very long, because the nuptials apparently solve everything. The play ends with the whole group in a celebratory dance.

"Ask them how old they are when get married," Jakes said aloud to anyone who could provide an answer. When he heard back a number, he shook his head. "Sixteen years? Fifteen years? Oh no, oh no, no. That's terrible."

Later, when we were talking about practices prevalent in Africa such as child marriage and female genital mutilation,

Jakes said to me, "When I hear of female genital mutilation, I think of my own children, and it's gut-wrenching for me. My heart goes out to the young girls, and I think, *There's a better way*. And if I'm going to correct something, at least it's not a distortion of who we are culturally. And so it's not that I worship ancestry and that I think that it's flawless or spotless, but at least it is mine. And that's important. It sets the record straight."

Setting the record straight squares with the message Jakes delivers in Dallas. It means filling in the gaps of a person's own history, recognizing the negative aspects of that history as well as its glory. It's a tool that can move one away from always simply looking back to the slave ships and Reconstruction and segregated drinking fountains.

In truth, though, one couldn't get close to Jakes in Kenya, where he'd be surrounded by large groups of children at one event and then retreat into the darkened corners of the Serna Hotel, in Nairobi, and talk for hours to local pastors. To be with him there was to see a man struggle under the weight of the very goals he'd set for himself as a man of God, a promoter of upward mobility, an international evangelist, a husband and father, a simple preacher, a sophisticated businessman. People who set out to change the world are not quite like the rest of us. They can sit in our homes, share our taxis, and attend the birthday parties of our children. But they are never fully detached from the great personal sacrifice that the role entails. For someone like Jakes, everyone from a beleaguered president in the White House to a malnourished Kenyan boy in a shantytown is tugging at his cuffs.

A couple of months after the Africa trip I asked Jakes if he thought of himself as a post-civil-rights-movement leader. The civil-rights issues of the 1950s and 1960s were large, overt, and, in a sense, "simple": it was easy to unite around them. The politics and demographics of today's America, including today's black America, are more complicated. In terms of black leadership, how does Jakes place himself within the paradigm shift that seems to be occurring from the old guard to the new? Laughing, he said, "I struggle with that. My perspectives tend to be pastoral, you know? And I think I'm evolving. And that evolution is still new to me—because though I am pastoral, I also understand that I have an obligation to our people.

"I see myself as a leader, and as a leader I have a responsibility to reflect the views of my faith, and the views of my people—and those are two different things altogether. My thought at this point is, anything that I can do to really help to bring about equality among all people—I'm willing to do that. Even if it stretches my role ... a little bit. I believe that God created us to be equal, and I believe that we should be treated fairly no matter who we are. Does that make me a civil-rights leader? I don't know. But it does make me an American who would fight to the death for what I believe." ■



An Iraqi policeman (foreground) on patrol with American troops, Tal Afar, Iraq

THE RIGHT WAY

Seven steps toward a last chance in Iraq

BY KENNETH M. POLLACK

.....

Iraq hangs in the balance. December's elections once again demonstrated the desire of Iraqis for a prosperous, pluralist, and pacific country. There should be little doubt that the vast majority of the Iraqi people want to see reconstruction succeed. This is the most powerful of the positive factors that could enable a new Iraqi state to overcome sectarian differences and serve as a force for stability in the larger Middle East.

But both the Iraqi people and the American people are growing increasingly frustrated with the persistent failings of reconstruction. They worry that the United States and the new Iraqi

government do not have a strategy that can succeed. For this reason, 2006 will likely prove decisive for the future of Iraq: reconstruction efforts must finally begin to show tangible results, or else people in both Iraq and America will lose faith that positive outcomes are even possible. And the brutal reality is that time is running out. A six- to

twelve-month window of opportunity may be all that remains before the spiral toward possible chaos and civil war is beyond control.

Iraq is beset by a host of deep-seated problems. In some cases these are masked by superficial aspects of progress. For instance, security has

Kenneth M. Pollack is the director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. His most recent book is The Persian Puzzle (2004).

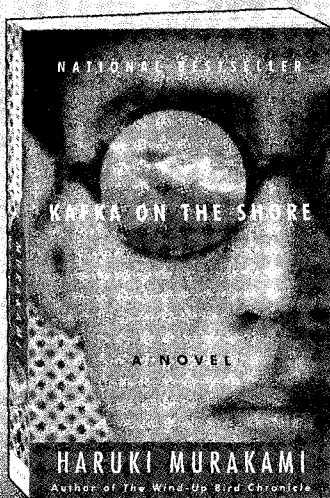
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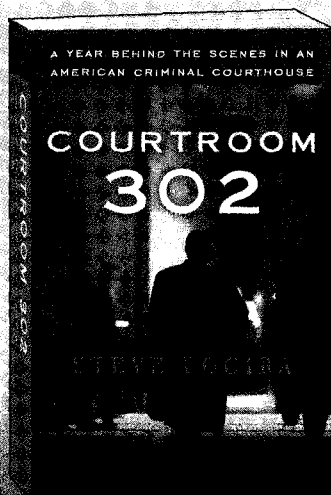
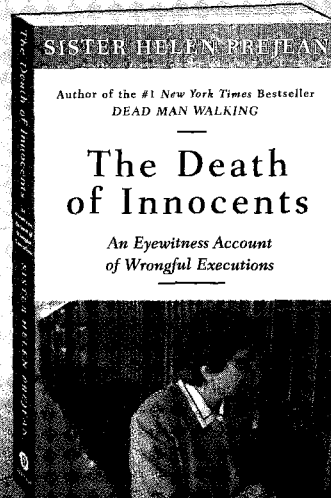


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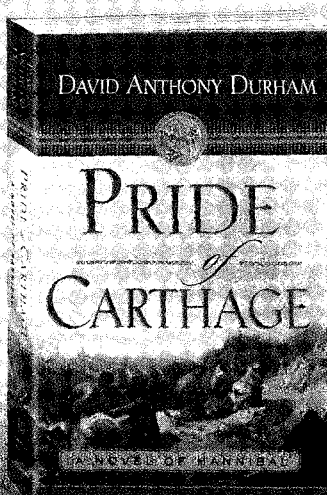
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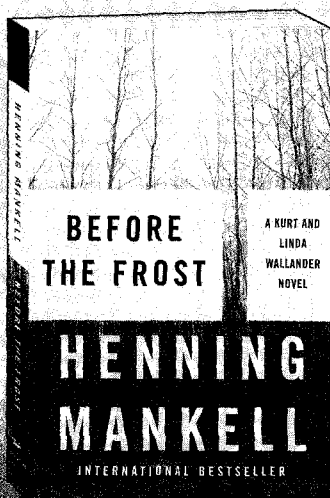
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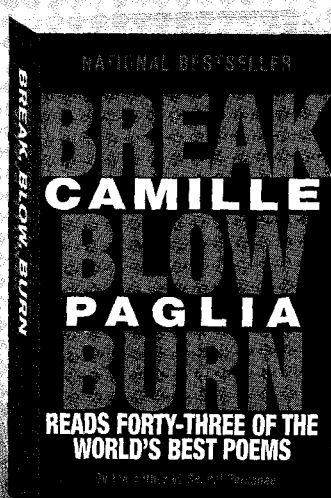
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 **VINTAGE**

increased somewhat in many parts of Iraq because sectarian militias have taken control there and because looters and petty criminals have been consolidated into organized crime rings. This is not a meaningful improvement, because it carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. While Iraq may seem “safer” for the moment, it is, in fact, less secure for the longer term.

The most damaging reality of all is that the United States created a security vacuum in April of 2003 that it has never properly filled. This has given rise to two related and interlinked phenomena: a full-blown insurgency, largely based in the Sunni tribal community of western Iraq; and a failed state, in which the governmental architecture has essentially collapsed. Thus, Iraq not only faces problems similar to those that the United States confronted in Vietnam—and the British in Northern Ireland, the French in Algeria, and the Russians in Afghanistan—but also many that plagued Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, and Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Confronting the problems of Iraq means crafting a strategy that will not only defeat the insurgency but will simultaneously deal with the myriad problems stemming from Iraq as a failed state, one that is at this point held together almost entirely by the American military presence.

The clock may be ticking, but all is not lost; it is possible to imagine a different strategic approach. Over the past several months the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution brought together a group of experts on Iraq, military affairs, reconstruction, and democratization to undertake a thorough review of U.S. policy on Iraq. This group, the Iraq Policy Working Group, reflected a wide range of beliefs and politics. It included military and civilian personnel who have served in various governments. Most of them have also had significant on-the-ground experience in Iraq. The group met to try to answer this question: If America can't leave Iraq precipitately, what should we be doing differ-

ently to give ourselves the greatest prospect of success? The result is a 70,000-word report on all aspects of Iraq policy, from security to economics to politics, which is available on this magazine's Web site (www.theatlantic.com).

What follows is a summary of some key points about shifting American strategy to make it more likely that reconstruction will succeed. Solutions to the many problems that the United States faces in Iraq do exist. Indeed, there was not a single problem that the Iraq Working Group addressed—from stamping out the insurgency to reconciling Iraq's warring factions to eradicating the corruption plaguing Iraq's new ministries—for which an effective response cannot be envisaged. The real question facing the United States is not whether there are workable ideas but whether the administration is willing to change its strategy, quickly and decisively—and whether the American people are willing to give these workable ideas the time they need to show results.

1 MAKE PROTECTING THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY.

There is a large, coherent body of literature on the practice and history of counterinsurgent warfare, and what is most remarkable about it is that it all draws on the same lessons. So does the literature on stability operations—operations that address the problems of failed states. The principal one is that the most important mission of counterinsurgency forces is to provide basic safety for the population against attack, extortion, threat, and simple fear. If the people are afraid to leave their homes—or worse still, if they are afraid even while in their homes—the guerrillas and other forces of chaos have effectively won. The people will not support the government; they will be susceptible to insurgents and extremist militias; they will not go about their normal business; and the economy will suffer, as will the political system. This is precisely what any insurgent seeks to accomplish, and what the Iraqi insurgents largely have done. Consequently, American forces must fundamentally reorient their priorities to make what is called “area security”—protecting Iraqi towns and neighborhoods—their highest concern.

The United States and the Iraqi security forces must focus on making the Iraqi people feel safe in their homes, their streets, and their places of business. This does not mean simply deploying soldiers in defensive positions around Iraqi population centers (although in some cases that can be helpful). It means establishing a constant presence throughout those areas to reassure the population and deter (or defeat) insurgents or militias. Constant patrols (principally on foot); checkpoints; and security personnel deployed at major gathering points—markets, entertainment, religious or political events, and even main intersections or thoroughfares—create that sense of constant presence. Security personnel should conduct searches routinely for any person entering a large facility—a business or apartment complex, a *sug* or shopping mall, a sports arena, etc. Fixed defensive positions,

PYRACANTHA AND PLUM

Last autumn's chastened berries still on one tree,
spring blossoms seeming tender,
hopeful, on another.
The view from this window
much as it was ten years ago, fifteen.
Yet it seems this morning
a self-portrait both clearer and darker,
as if while I slept some Rembrandt or Brueghel
had walked through the garden, looking hard.

—JANE HIRSHFIELD

Jane Hirshfield's new collection, After, has just been published. She received an Academy Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets in 2004.

checkpoints, or ambushes can be employed against known routes of attack or infiltration by the insurgents. Key infrastructure must be guarded—with personnel for a single facility; and with sensors, patrols, and quick-reaction teams for pipelines, roads, communications lines, or water/sewage lines.

2 SHIFT THE STRATEGIC EMPHASIS FROM OFFENSIVE TO DEFENSIVE MILITARY OPERATIONS.

President Bush stated last summer that “the principal task of our military is to find and defeat the terrorists, and that is why we are on the offense.” While this is an accurate description of the American military approach, it is, unfortunately, wrong in terms of what is needed. The right formulation would be that “the principal task of our military is to protect the Iraqi people, and that is why we are mainly on the defense.” Instead, the approach we are employing in Iraq—concentrating our forces in Iraq’s western provinces where the insurgents are thickest and support for reconstruction weakest—means committing the cardinal military sin of reinforcing failure. Such an approach has resulted in failures against guerrilla warfare throughout history. Moreover, it has meant ceding control over much of the populace to the forces of chaos (the militias), which is the cardinal sin of stability operations (the name for operations designed to deal with failed states). Our efforts to “take the fight to the enemy” and mount offensive sweep operations designed to kill insurgents and eliminate their strongholds have failed to work, and likely will continue to do so, as was the case in Vietnam and other lost guerrilla wars.

Large-scale offensive military operations cannot succeed, and can be counterproductive, against a full-blown insurgency. The guerrilla does not need to stand and fight, but can run or melt back into the population and so avoid crippling losses. If the counterinsurgency forces do not remain and pacify the area for the long term, the guerrillas will be back within weeks, months, or maybe years, but they will be back nonetheless. Meanwhile, the concentration of forces on these sweep operations means a major diversion of effort away from securing the population.

This is precisely what is happening in Iraq. While there needs to be an offensive component to any strategy no matter how defensive in orientation, the offensive component in counterinsurgency campaigns should mostly consist of limited attacks on unequivocally clear and important insurgent strongholds, or immediate counterattacks against guerrilla forces when they are vulnerable after an attack of their own. One of the hardest things for highly effective conventional militaries like ours to understand is that in unconventional warfare, like counterinsurgency and stability operations, the path to victory is to remain on the strategic defensive in the military arena while going on the offensive in the political and economic arenas.

The administration’s recently adopted “clear, hold, and build” strategy is a step in the right direction, but still falls short of the mark. Of greatest importance, it is being implemented in the wrong part of Iraq (the Sunni Triangle) and so is continuing to draw off forces from where they are most needed, in southern and central Iraq, where the public favors reconstruction but is souring on it because of the persistent state of insecurity. However, even within the Sunni Triangle, the United States is not employing enough troops to meaningfully “hold” areas or enough resources to really “build” there. For instance, during Operation Iron Hammer last September, the U.S. 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, boasting nearly 5,000 troops, cleared Tal

Our efforts to “take the fight to the enemy” have failed to work. Large-scale offensive military operations cannot succeed against a full-blown insurgency. We should concentrate on defense.

Afar, but was replaced just a few weeks later by a battalion roughly one-tenth its size. That is simply not enough troops to “hold” Tal Afar. Similarly, after the Marine reduction of Fallujah, the United States left only a brigade-sized formation there, which has been large enough to prevent the town from reverting back to the control of the insurgents and Sunni militias but not enough to actually preserve security and stability there or make it possible for meaningful economic and political reconstruction to begin.

3 EMPHASIZE POPULATION SECURITY IN THE SOUTH AND CENTER OF IRAQ.

In a pattern reminiscent of our disastrous early experiences in Vietnam, the American (and Iraqi) military forces have concentrated on trying to capture or kill insurgents and clear out their strongholds in western Iraq, where both the population and support for American reconstruction is thinnest. As noted above, not only is this unlikely to succeed but, in so doing, we have denuded central and southern Iraq of the forces so desperately needed to maintain order, enable the economy to revive, and prevent the militias from taking over. By leaving these areas without adequate protection, the Coalition has left the people there prey not only to insurgent attacks but to crime and lawlessness more generally, which has crippled economic and political revival. It has also left the vast bulk of Iraq’s population vulnerable to the militias, which take over wherever there is not a significant Coalition military presence and provide the people the protection, food, and other basic necessities that the Americans and the Iraqi central government have not supplied. In this way, through intimidation or accommodation, the sectarian militias have taken over

much of central and southern Iraq, where most of Iraq's population resides.

Not only do the militias distort reconstruction but, along with the Sunni insurgents, they are the force most likely to bring civil war to Iraq. In fact, the militias are probably a greater threat to the future of Iraq than is the insurgency. As President Bush rightly pointed out, the *insurgency is itself* composed of at least three different primary groups: the Salafi Jihadists like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia; the last of Saddam Hussein's leading hench-

The security vacuum the United States created after the fall of Saddam Hussein is what made it possible for the militias—which are probably a greater threat than the insurgents—to establish themselves. The only way to reverse this phenomenon is to fill that vacuum.

men, who know that the new Iraq has nothing to offer them except the hangman's noose; and a large group of Sunni tribes and others who are much more like the Shiite (and Sunni) militias that now dominate central and southern Iraq than they are like the other two groups. Like the other militias, these groups are fighting because they seek power and control over swaths of Iraq, they fear what the new Iraqi government will mean for them, and they fear the violence of the Shiite militias just as the Shia fear them. Incidents of ethnic cleansing, assassination, and other violence by Shiite militias and Sunni militias/insurgents against one another and against Iraqi civilians are becoming more and more common in Iraq and will provoke a civil war if they are not brought under control.

The security vacuum the United States created after the fall of Saddam Hussein is what made it possible for the militias to establish themselves; the only way to reverse this phenomenon is to fill that vacuum. Very few of the Shiite militias have ever tried to resist Coalition forces when they moved into an area in strength, because they understood that doing so was essentially suicidal. Once the Coalition has concentrated sufficient forces to move back into a population center in central or southern Iraq, it should be able to do so. Then, Iraqi and American forces must remain in strength over time, and in so doing obviate the rationale that drove the locals to support the militia. This is critical, not only to create a basis for defeating the insurgency but to prevent the failed-state aspects from causing the country to spiral out of control.

Once these enclaves are secured, and as additional Iraqi security forces are trained, they should be slowly expanded to include additional communities. This approach, which has been put forward most notably by the military analyst

Andrew Krepinevich, is typically referred to either as a "spreading ink spot" or as a "spreading oil stain" because the counterinsurgency forces slowly spread their control over the country, depriving the guerrillas of support piece by piece. The administration has embraced this idea rhetorically, but not operationally.

If implemented properly, a true counterinsurgency approach can succeed in winning back the entire country. However, it means ceding control over some parts at first and taking some time before all of Iraq will be seen as a stable, unified, pluralist state. Nevertheless, it is worth considering that the United States and the Iraqi government currently do not control much of the country, because it is in the hands of insurgent groups or militias. Thus, the strategy is really about *acknowledging* that we can control only part of the country with the forces currently available—and using them to exert our control over the most important parts rather than squandering them playing Whac-A-Mole with insurgents in parts that we cannot control.

The key to this approach is that it "solves" the problem of inadequate force levels, which was one of the original mistakes of the war. The problem here was that we did not have an adequate concentration of forces to secure the country against either the insurgents or the problems of Iraq as a failed state (like organized crime and the militias). The guiding principle of a spreading-oil-stain approach is that it allows the counterinsurgent force to concentrate in part of the country and then slowly pacify the rest, using time to substitute for numbers.

Numbers in warfare are always slippery, but it is impossible to avoid them for planning purposes. For both counterinsurgency operations and stability operations, the canonical figure is that there need to be twenty security personnel (military and police) per 1,000 of the population. The population of Iraq today is roughly 26 million, which would suggest the need for 520,000 security personnel. However, the 4 million or so Kurds who live inside Iraqi Kurdistan enjoy considerable safety because they are protected by approximately 70,000 peshmerga fighters. To secure the remaining 22 million people, then, would require about 440,000 security personnel. This number is the baseline figure for what will be required ultimately to stabilize Iraq. Unfortunately, we are far from that number. At present, the United States has 135,000 to 160,000 troops in Iraq at any given time. They are joined by roughly 10,000 British and Australian troops, along with a grab bag of other detachments that may withdraw in 2006 and so should not be considered for planning purposes. There are probably some 40,000 to 60,000 Iraqi security personnel in the army, national guard, police force, and other units that are capable of participating in security operations in a meaningful way. This yields a total of 185,000 to 230,000

Coalition security personnel, a force that should be capable of securing a population of 9 million to 11.5 million, or about half of Iraq's population outside Kurdistan.

If the United States and the Iraqi government were to begin with only this baseline of troops and were to employ a traditional counterinsurgency strategy, withdrawing most of their forces from those areas of Iraq most opposed to reconstruction and instead concentrating the troops and resources on areas of high importance and high support for reconstruction, its starting oil stain could encompass Baghdad, all of central Iraq, and a significant portion of southern Iraq, with a smaller "economy of force" presence in northwest Iraq to prevent the situation there from deteriorating. Different strategists might draw the oil stain differently, but that is a very big area to start with and would allow the further pacification of the rest of Iraq within a number of years.

4 TRAIN IRAQI FORCES PROPERLY. A SHOWY "ACCELERATION" IS WORSE THAN USELESS.

The single greatest problem with all American efforts to train a new Iraqi military has been (and to some extent, continues to be) political pressure to quickly produce more trained Iraqi units in order to "show progress" in Iraq. This has been disastrous. The first training program instituted by Major General Paul Eaton's team was a perfectly reasonable one, and could have achieved its objectives had the Bush administration not demanded that Eaton both speed up the training course and increase the numbers of Iraqis trained. Even today, both the administration and its critics continue to press for *accelerated* training—meaning getting people through the training pipeline in shorter amounts of time—and a more rapid deployment of Iraqi forces to take over for American soldiers.

This is the worst approach we could take. The quality of Iraqi forces is far more important than their quantity if our goal is for the Iraqis to shoulder a greater and greater share of the burden of securing their country. The only way to produce troops sufficiently capable of doing so is to give them the time, in both formal and informal training, to develop such quality.

Like all new military units, Iraqi formations, even after their formal training is completed, need time to further jell. Unit cohesion starts to be formed in training, but it is inevitably tested by the first operations that a formation undertakes and can really emerge only in an operational environment—and only if the unit survives its early experiences. So, too, with the confidence of Iraqi recruits, and with the leadership skills of their officers. What's more, the process of vetting—weeding out those unsuited for the tasks at hand or those working for the enemy—is a lengthy one, and it is not unusual for soldiers and officers to do well in training but fail once placed in actual combat situations. Therefore, Iraqi troops not only need longer periods

of formal training; they desperately need longer periods of informal training in the kind of permissive conditions that will enable them to learn and bond without being thrown into high-intensity combat.

The United States believed, at least twice since the fall of Baghdad, that it had adequately trained and prepared Iraqi security forces only to have them collapse in combat. In April of 2004, roughly half of the security forces in southern and central Iraq melted away when confronted by the revolt of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Similarly, in November of 2004, Coalition personnel believed that the Iraqi security forces around Mosul were doing fine: they had gone through the existing training programs, were deployed in and around the city, and seemed to be doing an excellent job maintaining law and order. However, that month, Sunni insurgents mounted a series of major attacks, and all but one battalion of these Iraqi security forces evaporated.

The nagging question plaguing Iraq's security forces is, How can we be sure that this latest force, which also seems to be fully capable and participating in combat operations, does not fall apart like its predecessors in southern and central Iraq in April of 2004 and around Mosul in November of 2004? The only answer to that question is time. The more time we give Iraqi formations to train, conduct exercises, and operate first in conditions that favor success, the more likely they will be to survive the test of real combat.

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5 CREATE A UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE.

This is another well-known lesson that the United States continues to ignore. First, there needs to be a single “campaign chief” heading the entire effort. That person should have complete control over both the civilian and military sides of the American effort. There are arguments as to why that person should be from the military, but equally good ones as to why he or she should be a civilian. The historical evidence is equally mixed, but what it suggests is that the personality and skills of the individual are far more important than where he or she comes from. This campaign chief should have the authority and purview of something like a Roman proconsul, and be capable of making executive decisions on all matters to achieve the goal.

If America does not begin to get things right—and this means making sweeping changes to our approach—within the next few months, we face the prospect of a vicious cycle propelling Iraq toward full-blown civil war.

Beneath that campaign chief and his or her deputy there must be a fully integrated chain of command. Every division, brigade, and battalion must be part of it, as should the personnel of every civilian agency in country. Ideally the United States would create reconstruction committees at every level of the chain of command, and these committees would bring together, at a minimum, the relevant military commander, the relevant State Department officer, a USAID official, and an intelligence officer, and their Iraqi counterparts. At present, American military personnel are often the only Americans in any given town or neighborhood in Iraq. They have neither the skills, the resources, nor the time to spend on aid contracts, political negotiations, engineering projects, and the like. These are jobs that should be handled by civilian agencies, but because those personnel are not present outside the Green Zone, their jobs fall on the shoulders of the military. Military officers have risen admirably to that challenge, but it is one they should not have to bear.

The administration’s nascent plan to deploy Provincial Reconstruction Teams to Iraq has some merit, but is by no means enough, because it will not erect an integrated hierarchy reaching from the bottom to the top of Iraqi society. The PRTs in Iraq rely too heavily on military personnel and so are better suited to helping with security-sector than civilian-sector reforms. More important, PRTs are teams that work with local Iraqi officials; they are not a hierarchy that integrates the reconstruction effort both horizontally and vertically, which is what Iraq desperately needs.

6 DECENTRALIZE POWER— AND OIL REVENUES.

Iraq’s central government is now fully constituted but essentially powerless. It lacks the resources and the institutions to tackle any of the challenges facing the country. Iraq’s ministries are understaffed and eviscerated by endemic corruption of a kind that compares unfavorably even with Saddam Hussein’s regime. Iraq’s political leaders are consumed by discussions over power-sharing, and often care little about their constituents. The Iraqi capital is incapable of doing much for the Iraqi people, but quite capable of preventing the rest of the country from providing for itself. In the long run Washington must try to build the capacity of Iraq’s central government. But in the short term it is critical to shift authority and outside resources away from

Baghdad and toward local governments that might be able to start delivering the basic necessities Iraqis crave. The United States can help with this process by expanding its efforts to provide funds directly to local governments to be spent at their discretion, and by pressing the new Iraqi government to transfer control over the country’s various police forces from the Ministry of the Interior to local authorities. Without control

over financial or security power, local governments will be irrelevant. Washington also needs to help reduce the role of Iraqi ministries by shifting implementation, contracting, and some elements of regulation to local governments.

Iraq’s oil revenues must be used both to build central-government capacity and to decentralize power and authority. That oil can be a blessing or a curse. At present it is mostly a curse, fueling the vicious infighting among political elites looking for a bigger (illegal) cut of Iraq’s oil revenue. This revenue must be used instead to create incentives for Iraqi politicians to start caring about their constituents, to promote the decentralization of power beyond Baghdad, and to foster the process of national reconciliation by removing oil as an issue to be fought over.

The only way this will be possible is if Iraq switches to a relatively fixed system of distribution that provides funds to several “baskets.” Some money would still have to go to the central government to pay for national defense, government salaries, and other indivisible functions, but this will cost a lot less if decentralization is pursued. Other money should be provided directly to local governments, preferably in two forms: one portion divided up on a fixed basis by population in each province and municipality, and another in which varying amounts would be apportioned to different communities based on the deliberations of the Iraq National Assembly. The purpose of this latter pool would be to force Iraq’s parliamentarians—who currently pay little attention to the needs of their constituents—to fight for their communities or risk losing their jobs. Finally,

yet another basket should provide some money directly to the people in the form of regular deposits into individual bank accounts, which would help capitalize Iraq's withered banking system. Giving the Iraqi people a direct stake in oil revenues would also galvanize them to oppose both organized crime and the insurgents who steal the oil and its revenues. Finally, putting money into the hands of the people and giving them a choice over how to spend it would allow market forces to help lead Iraq's economic recovery.

7 BRING IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

Although the topic has largely faded from the op-ed pages, there are important roles to be played by the United Nations and the international community. Now that the December elections have ushered in what is to be Iraq's permanent and fully sovereign new government, it is a fitting moment for the United States to begin handing over some of the burden of guiding Iraq's reconstruction to an international body. This would be helpful because the United States is increasingly wearing out its welcome; shifting to a more international approach would allow us to prolong the process of reconstruction longer than would a go-it-alone approach.

Moreover, it remains the case that the United Nations, through its various agencies, can call upon a vast network of personnel and resources vital to nation-building. One of the greatest problems the United States has faced is that we simply do not have enough people who know how to do all of the things necessary to rebuild the political and economic system of a shattered nation. We have not tried to do such a thing since at least Vietnam—if not since South Korea, Germany, and Japan. The UN has worked with thousands of people with the relevant skills in Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The ability to tap into a much bigger network is, in and of itself, a crucial virtue of the United Nations.

Is UN participation possible? Very much so, if the United States is willing to address two key problems: security and political cover. The violence plaguing Iraq has driven out most UN and nongovernmental organization, or NGO, personnel, and they are unlikely to return until the security situation improves. Here the answer, once again, is to implement a spreading-oil-stain approach in accord with traditional counterinsurgency doctrine. It is one of the many reasons why this strategy, and no other, succeeds in situations like the one the United States faces in Iraq. If Washington (and Baghdad) can demonstrate to UN agencies and NGOs that there are parts of Iraq that are largely safe—and that their personnel will remain in those safe zones—there is every reason to believe they would be willing to send more help.

The politics might be a bit more tricky. The problem here is that many UN member states cannot or will not

participate in a post-conflict occupation that is not under UN auspices. Likewise, many NGOs do not want to be part of something that they see as an act of American imperialism. Their politics notwithstanding, the obvious solution would be for the United States to accept a UN-authorized high commissioner, as we did in Bosnia—a move that senior American military officers in fact favor, precisely because it would help bring in more international personnel and would reduce some of the need for the United States to prevent the newly empowered Iraqi government from doing anything rash. Instead, that thankless task would largely fall to the high commissioner.

The United States must approach 2006 as a watershed year in Iraq. Either America—and it really is America, because the Iraqis simply do not have the military, political, or economic capacity to solve their own problems yet—really begins to get things right or we face the prospect of a vicious cycle propelling Iraq toward a full-blown civil war. For this reason, the gradual, evolutionary changes that the United States has made to its military, political, and economic approaches to Iraq since April of 2003 will no longer suffice. Within the next year—that is all the time they have—Washington and Baghdad must make sweeping changes to prove that they understand the problems and are putting in place new policies that can solve them. ▀

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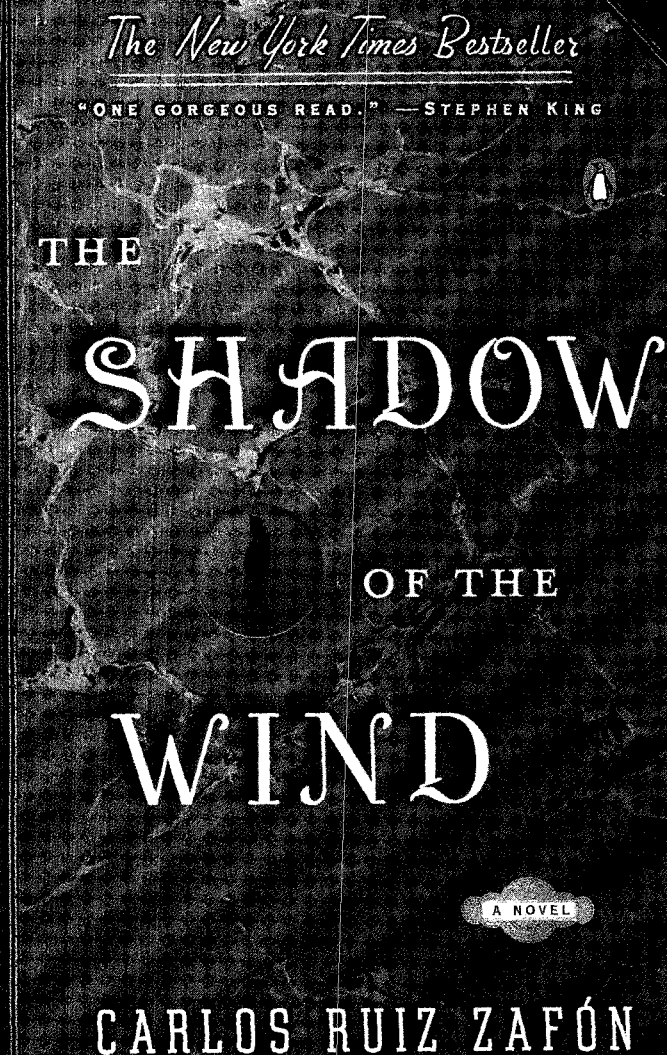
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BOOKS & CRITICS

MARCH 2006 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

THIS MONTH:

American Movie Critics: An Anthology From the Silents Until Now

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reviewed by Benjamin Schwarz
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An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration: From Pompeii to Art Nouveau

by Mario Praz
The House in Good Taste
by Elsie de Wolfe
The Personality of a House
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A Field Guide to Getting Lost

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BEST SELLERS ABROAD:

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Another 5001 Nights at the Movies

What to read this month

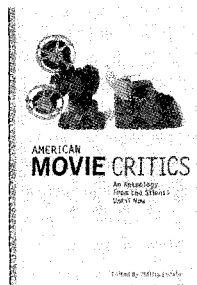
BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

Edmund Wilson and Jason Epstein, those giants of American letters, conceived the Library of America, one of the most ambitious and serious projects in the history of U.S. publishing, to provide authoritative texts, unencumbered by academic paraphernalia, of the canonical works

of this country's literature (drama, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction), bound in handsome, uniform volumes and printed on for-the-ages stock—all at a reasonable price. It's strayed from its mission, with both happy and, at times, questionable results.

LOA's notion of what constitutes essential authors has expanded from the likes of Melville and Twain to such a motley crew as William Bartram, H. P. Lovecraft, and Charles W. Chesnutt. This is a more or less welcome development: what we lose in the slackening of canonical standards, we more than gain by having the works of neglected, commercially unviable, important-if-not-great writers easily and cheaply obtainable (though, really, Ambrose Bierce merits an LOA edition before, say, Charles Brockden Brown). On the other hand, some of the "special anthologies" containing writings by various authors—the baseball and "sea writing" compendia, the keepsake-y, prettily illustrated "gift book" *American Writers at Home*—seem like moneymaking schemes designed to help this nonprofit venture defray the cost of bringing James Weldon Johnson's poetry and editorials within easy reach of every American book buyer. However remunerative, though, such productions of course threaten to dilute the brand, as they say. So, just months after reviewing LOA's edition of the works of James Agee—who among other things is the most fancily literary film critic in our history—I greeted this 700-plus-page anthology of the writings of American movie critics (LOA can't possibly get any deeper into pop culture than that) with some wariness, which hasn't completely abated.

The editor, Phillip Lopate, opens his lengthy and deeply knowledgeable introduction with the declaration "It is arguable ... that in



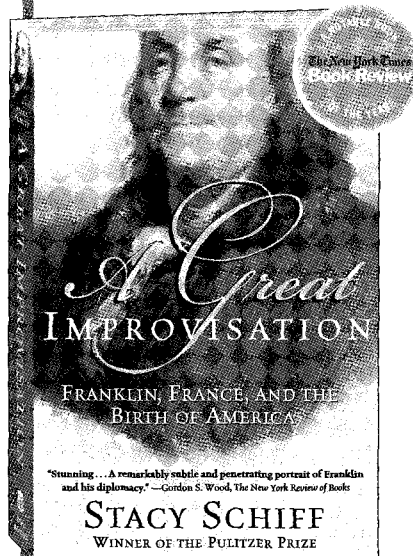
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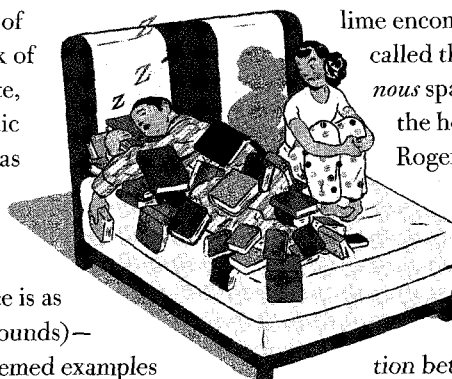
the last fifty years more energy, passion, and analytical juice have gone into film criticism than into ... any other writing about the arts." Arguable? No, certain. (And I say that even though I'm a little unsure of what, exactly, "analytical juice" is.) But the editor's own criteria for selection can't always be reconciled with the writings assembled in this volume. To be sure, Lopate could have gone terribly wrong here, and he didn't. "Film studies" attracts far more than its share of pseudo-intellectual, jargon-clotted nonsense, and he's included almost none. But whereas previous anthologies of film criticism sought merely to collect compelling or influential writings about the movies, Lopate aims to include only works of the highest artistic value. This book, he says, "celebrates ... critical writing that honors the best belletristic tradition of our nonfiction prose" and therefore he has focused on "film criticism as an art in itself—the magnet for strong, elegant, eloquent, enjoyable writing." That's setting the bar a little high, or rather setting two different bars: surely most writing that's strong, elegant, and enjoyable (as rare an achievement as that is) isn't art. Furthermore, Carl Sandburg's pleasant if ephemeral and completely unremarkable reviews, Melvin B. Tolson's crude diatribe against *Gone With the Wind*'s racism, and bell

hooks's assessment of *Pulp Fiction*—a work of criticism that Lopate, with uncharacteristic obtuseness, *praises* as "moving effortlessly between street talk and poststructuralist theory" (the piece is as "enjoyable" as that sounds)—can't possibly be deemed examples of "the best belletristic tradition of our nonfiction prose." But, in all fairness, neither can the smoothly crafted reviews of Stanley Kauffmann or John Simon, nor such well-written (if sometimes dated) landmarks in film studies as the semi-scholarly selections

included here by Siegfried Kracauer, Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, Barbara Deming, Molly Haskell, Stanley Cavell, and James Harvey. I'm sure Lopate knows this, and I think he's guilty only of sloppily explaining his criteria. He's in fact arranged an astute collection of the most important American writers on the movies (reviewers, freelance critics, a few academics and quasi-academics). He's admirably championed critics who have long gone underappreciated. And, most important, he's highlighted writings of extraordinary literary merit by several movie critics, a few of whom are long forgotten except by the cognoscenti.

With a few glaring exceptions (nearly all of which can be attributed to that lamentable, dogged pursuit of inclusiveness and diversity), Lopate displays highly cultivated taste. Years ago I'd read some of Cecilia Ager's glamorous, breezy reviews from the 1930s, which combined a refined eye for fashion with a sure, sharp grasp of the feminine mind. I'd come across them in Alistair Cooke's nearly eighty-year-old classic anthology of movie criticism, *Garbo and the Night Watchmen* (Cooke considered her the country's preeminent movie critic). I hadn't read her work or anything about her since then, but sure enough, Lopate has gathered a nice assortment here. He

also fits in Arlene Croce's sublime encomium to what she called the "delicious *entre nous* sparkle of fun" at the heart of the Astaire-Rogers partnership, and to the way the pair transformed dancing "into a vehicle of serious emotion between a man and a woman," which "never happened in the movies again." (Croce's slim, elegant 1972 *The Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers Book* is simply one of the best volumes about film ever published.) He not only includes the work of David Thomson, author of the



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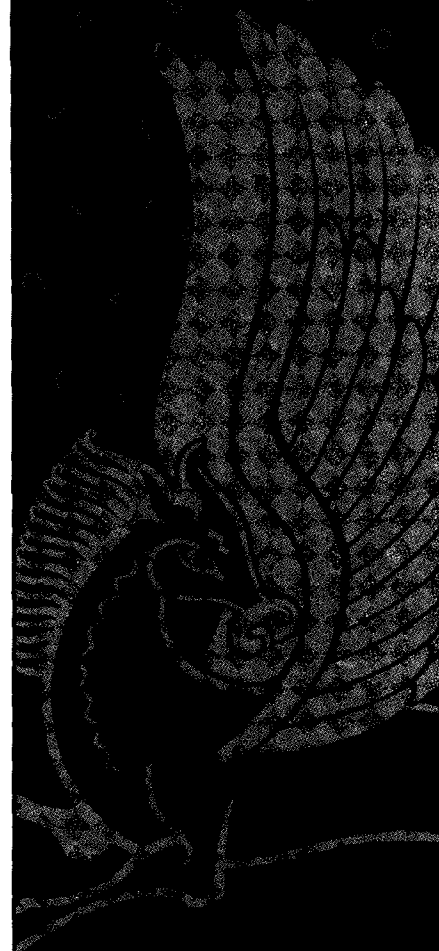
audacious and addictive *A Biographical Dictionary of Film*, but he chooses from Thomson's thousand entries the two finest: his portraits of Cary Grant ("the best and most important actor in the history of the cinema") and of Howard Hawks (who captured better than any other filmmaker both masculine romanticism and "the dazzling battles of word, innuendo, glance, and gesture" between men and women). His one selection from Richard Corliss's body of reviews is that critic's responsibly contrarian evisceration of Robert Altman's grossly overrated, mean-spirited, and cheaply hip *M*A*S*H*. He energetically rehabilitates the reputation of the wryly incisive Vincent Canby (who, toward the end of his long perch at *The New York Times*, was sometimes unfairly regarded by the relentlessly modish as something of a fuddy-duddy), pronouncing him the best daily reviewer this country has ever produced—and in the process treats us to Canby's spot-on assessment of the trite, smug, and "determinedly inarticulate" *Easy Rider* (the collection clearly if unintentionally suggests that quite a few of the vaunted "masterpieces" of the late 1960s and 1970s should be taken down a peg or three). With acuity he selects Roger Ebert's winsome and wise appraisal of Ernst Lubitsch's oh-so-adult *Trouble in Paradise* ("the characters have a weight of experience behind them that suggests they know life cannot be played indefinitely for laughs"), an essay that nicely displays the critic's lightness of touch and enormous erudition—attributes Ebert is unable to convey on TV.

In his sampling of the work of Andrew Sarris, the American critic most strongly associated with the auteur theory, whom some castigate, wrongly, for overlooking performance in his prevailing concentration on cinematic technique, Lopate insightfully chooses an uncharacteristic essay—a moving appreciation of the greatness of John Wayne's acting, in which Sarris says of that performer's relationship with those iconic directors John Ford and Hawks, "They needed him more than he needed them

... he had become his own auteur," and in which Sarris with offhanded Achesonian elegance sums up the mystery at the heart of great film acting: "The worst acting is so often mistaken for the best, particularly on the screen, where being transcends pretending, and just standing there can often be more effective than doing something." (Alas, Lopate doesn't bring in Joan Didion's two greatest pieces on film—her shimmeringly romantic essay on Wayne, certainly among the loveliest pieces ever penned on the movies, and "I Can't Get That Monster Out of My Mind," her withering assessment of Hollywood's fatal penchant for message-y films, a penchant that it seems the industry will never overcome.)

Lopate's most significant contribution, though, is his elevation of Otis Ferguson, whom he rates among the five greatest American film critics. *The New Republic's* movie reviewer from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s (he was killed in the Second World War), Ferguson combined a genius for compression with a pulsating, conversational, and exact diction. He deployed these gifts to convey the uniquely beguiling qualities of the best American actors (he was probably the first to properly praise Fred MacMurray's "open, sustained kind of charm"; his consideration of James Cagney—who "somehow managed to be a lot of what a typical American might be, nobody's fool and nobody's clever ape, quick and cocky but not too wise for his own goodness, frankly vulgar in the best sense, with the dignity of the genuine worn as easily as his skin"—is the best appraisal of the actor ever written). More important, Ferguson perfectly explicated the finely wrought, unified style of the Hollywood motion picture. His at once relaxed and surgical formal analysis revealed the colossal complexity and the "tedious and backbreaking work" (from his piece "The Camera Way Is the Hard Way," sadly missing in this collection) of moviemaking, and he explained more clearly and engagingly than any critic before or since the

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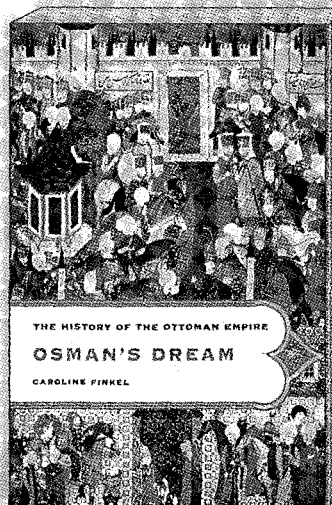
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meticulous way, shot by shot, sequence by sequence, that the Hollywood studios achieved their seamless style.

Although the bulk of the writing collected here doesn't rise to Lopate's highfalutin standards, what's noteworthy is that so much of it does. If movies and jazz are the arts that most fully express this country's creative character, so writing about movies is something American critics do with peculiar brilliance. The best and most characteristic qualities of American prose—its muscularity, its flexibility, its feistiness, its good-natured, conversational ease—have proved remarkably well suited to describing and dissecting both the movies and the aesthetic and emotional experience of watching them. And there's also a quality of love and play that's almost unique to the best American movie criticism. An extraordinary number of American authors who worked primarily in other genres were either at their best or were most themselves when writing about the pictures. When, say, the somewhat pretentious journalist and novelist Agee, or the dour and somewhat self-important social critic Dwight Macdonald, or the dour and somewhat self-important man of letters Wilson were indulging in movie criticism, they were plainly enraptured, plainly having just so much fun, plainly half lost in their childhoods, and plainly at their most unguarded. Lopate perceptively notes the plethora of personal details and idiosyncrasies almost customarily revealed in movie criticism, but while he attributes this to a deliberate essayistic technique, writing about the movies (which for so many critics here clearly amounted to writing about their first love) in fact seems to engender that kind of openness—which helps explain the passionate engagement, the headlong fluency, and the unfussiness that define so much of the greatest movie criticism. Writing about the movies was an occasion for male writers to be, as they say now, vulnerable and, more important perhaps, for women writers to let their hair down.

More important because the cynosure of this anthology is, of course, Pauline Kael, whose criticism, Lopate asserts without fanfare and with complete accuracy, "belongs with the best American nonfiction prose of the modern era." This anthology is arranged more or less chronologically, and it's impossible to read any important piece of writing before Kael's entries without recognizing a stylistic element or an argument that she'll develop, enhance, react to, or smack down, just as it's impossible to read any entry after hers without hearing her echo. Rereading here her most celebrated essay, "Trash, Art, and the Movies," you can't help arguing with her (in my case in notes all over the margins). How can she be so wrongheaded? (On one page she's provocatively dismissing analysis of the formal and stylistic elements of film; but on another she's acknowledging that those are the very elements that transform kitsch into art.) And then you're off like a pinball, bouncing from one of her scintillating insights to another, propelled by that sassy common sense, by the rollicking, slangy precision of her prose, by her dishy swagger. But for all that swagger, what makes Kael superlative is her femininity. More than any of her counterparts Kael, who famously used what she called "sexually tinged titles" for all her collections, and whose relationship with the movies most closely resembled a searing and lasting affair, appreciated the private, even erotic, nature of movie watching ("in the darkness at the movies where nothing is asked of us and we are left alone, the liberation from duty and constraint allows us to develop our own aesthetic responses"). And she perfected that feminine quality common to all the finest movie writing—a chatty intimacy—that is the best instrument to convey that experience. Despite its uneven contents and impossible claims, for most red-blooded American readers few books published this season will prove more absorbing. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

BOOKS

Home Alone

The dark heart of shelter-lit addiction

BY TERRY CASTLE

The late Mario Praz—dandy, scholar, eccentric chronicler of interior-decorating styles through the ages—once observed that human beings could be divided into those who cared about such things and those who didn't. An avid, even ensorcelled member of the first group, he confessed to finding people who were indifferent to décor both baffling and somewhat sinister. To discover that a friend was content to dwell in "fundamental and systematic ugliness," he wrote in *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration: From Pompeii to Art Nouveau*, was as disturbing as "turning over one of those ivory figurines carved by the German artificers of the Renaissance, which show a lovely woman on one side and a worm-ridden corpse on the other." All the more macabre when the friend was otherwise refined.

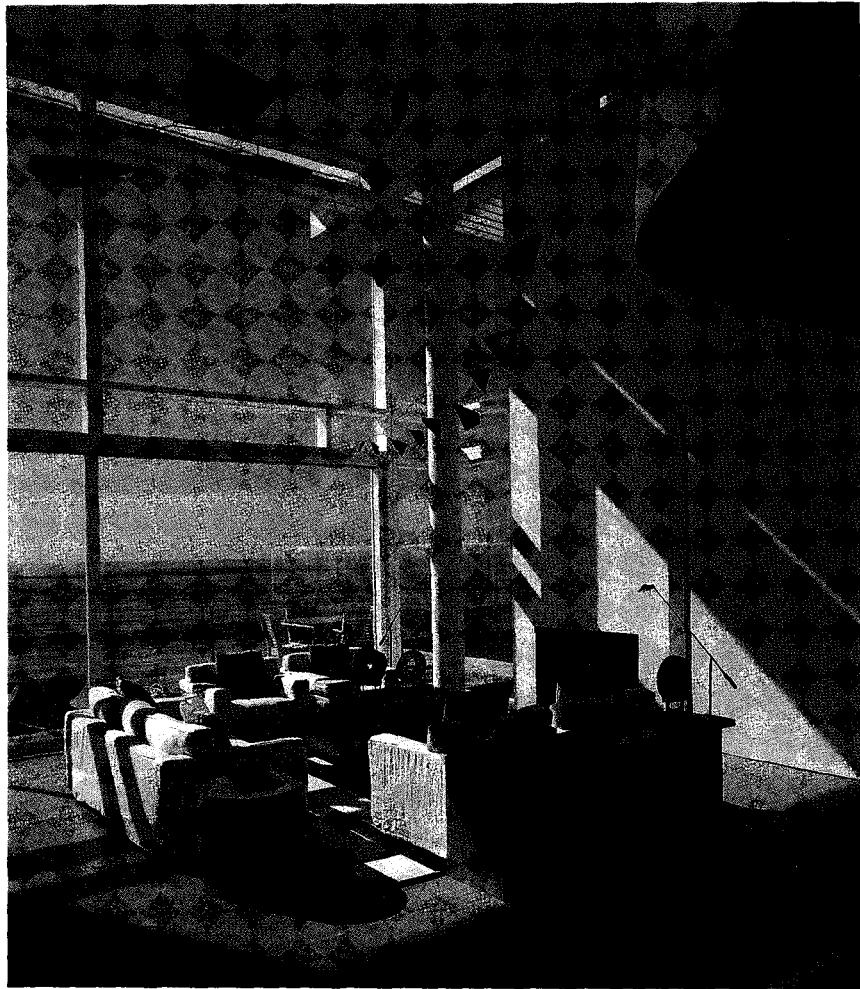
A venerated master of mine at the University of Florence used to say, from his lectern, many learned things about the Provençal poets. I hung on his every word. But it was a grim day when I first crossed the threshold of his house. As soon as the door was opened, I was confronted by a loathsome oleograph of a Neapolitan shepherdess (that same oleograph used to turn up often in the shops where unclaimed objects from the state pawnshop, the Monte di Pietà, are sold). The shepherdess, shading her eyes with her hand, affected a simpering smile, while Vesuvius smoked in the background.

Granted, for the "loathsome oleograph" (which now sounds enchantingly kitsch) one might want to substitute any number of contemporary abominations: fur-covered kitty condos placed nonchalantly in the living room, embroidered sofa pillows that say things like "She Who Must Be Obeyed" or "Bless This Mess," Southwestern-style bent-willow furniture

(barf), neoclassical wall sconces made out of glued and gilded polyurethane, monstrous sleigh beds from Restoration Hardware, Monet water-lily refrigerator magnets, fake "bistro" clocks, and just about any item of domestic ornament with an angel or a dolphin or a picture of Frida Kahlo on it. Yet even without a tchotchke update we can all sympathize with Praz's baffled revulsion: "It's curious, the squalor, the unnecessary and even deliberate squalor in which people who profess a sensitivity to the fine arts choose to live, or manage to adapt themselves."

Or at least *some* of us can. I think Praz is right: you either have the "interiors" thing going on or you don't. Sherlock Holmes would have no difficulty determining into which of Praz's categories I fall: a quick riffle through the contents of my mailbox—engorged each day to the point of overflowing—makes it comically clear.

The surreal monthly haul, I'm embarrassed to say, includes just about every shelter magazine known to man or woman, from *House and Garden*, *Elle Decor* (not to be confused with *Elle Decoration*, a British mag that I also get), *Metropolitan Home*, *House Beautiful*, and *Architectural Digest* to *Dwell*, *Wallpaper*, *Veranda*, the British *Homes and Gardens*, and—holy of holies—the epicene and intoxicating *World of Interiors*, a U.K. shelter mag so farcically upscale and eccentric that it might have been conceived by P. G. Wodehouse. (Until its recent demise I also subscribed to *nest*. More on that dark Manhattan cult mag later.) Add to these the innumerable glossy catalogues—from Pottery Barn, Crate & Barrel, Room and Board, Design Within Reach, Ikea, West Elm, Home Decorators Collection, Williams-Sonoma, Wisteria, Ballard Designs, Plow & Hearth, NapaStyle, Eddie Bauer Home, and the like—that regularly deluge anyone who





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has ever made the mistake (as I have) of ordering a distressed-teak milking stool or a kilim-covered ottoman online, and any residual doubt about my propensities will be removed.

The obsession, I confess, has its autoerotic dimension. At times, despite the ever renewing bounty on hand, I still mooch down to an insalubrious foreign newsstand near where I live in San Francisco and peruse *Maison Française*, *Maisons Côté Sud*, or *Résidences Décoration*—just to practice my French, of course. (Though rather more arduous linguistically, the German *Elle Decoration* also sometimes beckons.) Paging through the offerings on display, I am aware of bearing a discomfiting resemblance to various male regulars furtively examining the dirty magazines across the aisle. An ex-girlfriend (we split up in part over closet space) informs me I am a “house-porn addict,” and although the term is exactly the sort of metrosexual-hipster cliché, cheeky yet dull, that one finds every Thursday in the *New York Times* House & Home section, it does get at the curious feelings of guilt, titillation, and flooding bourgeois pleasure—relief delivered through hands and eyeballs— that such publications provide.

Yet more and more people, I've come to decide, must share my vice to some degree. The sheer ubiquitousness of interiors magazines—in airport terminals, supermarket checkout lines, big-box bookstores, doctors' offices, and other quintessentially modern (and

often stressful) locations—suggests I am not the only person, female or male, gay or straight, experiencing such cravings. (Though hardly one of the more

soigné publications, *Better Homes and Gardens*, owned by ABC Magazines, has an annual circulation of 7.6 million and generates nearly \$173 million in revenue a year.) And lately the oddest people have started to confess to me their shelter-mag obsessions—including, a couple of weeks ago, a scary-looking young 'zine writer with a metal bolt through her tongue and Goth-style tattoos all over her neck, arms, legs, and back. Crystal meth would seem to have nothing on *House Beautiful*—and the latter won't turn your teeth into pulpy little black stumps.

How to understand such collective absorption? One might moralize, of course, and simply write off the phenomenon as yet another example of life in obscene America—home of the fat, spoiled, and imbecilic. How dare to broach such a subject when more than 2.6 billion people, or “more than 40 percent of the world's population,” according to *The New York Times*, “lack basic

sanitation, and more than one billion people lack reliable access to safe drinking water.” Easy enough to say that shelter mags are silly and odious—not worth even talking about—and leave it at that.

Yet while satisfying to the censorious, such judgmentalism in another way begs the question. Even the most embarrassing or guilt-inducing features of daily

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF INTERIOR DECORATION: FROM POMPEII TO ART NOUVEAU

by Mario Pross
Thames and Hudson

THE HOUSE IN GOOD TASTE

by Elsie de Wolfe
Rizzoli

THE PERSONALITY OF A HOUSE

by Emily Post
Funk & Wagnalls

THE PRIVATE HOUSE

by Rose Tarlow
Clarkson Potter

NEST MAGAZINE

Joseph Holtzman,
Publisher and Editor

Photography from:

MODERN AMERICAN HOUSES: 50 YEARS OF DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

by Clifford A. Pearson
Harry N. Abrams

MALIBU: A CENTURY OF LIVING BY THE SEA

by Julius Shulman
and Juergen Nogai
Harry N. Abrams

THE RANCH HOUSE

by Alan Hess, Noah Sheldon
(photographer)
Harry N. Abrams

ARTISTS' HOUSES

by Gerard-Georges Lefrère
Vendôme Press

THE HOUSES OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD

by Keith Moskow
Monacelli

life, Freud famously argued, have their "psychopathology" and can be plumbed for truths about the human condition. One could as easily argue, it seems to me, that house porn, like the billion-dollar business of home improvement itself, is symptomatic—of a peculiar disquiet now haunting ordinary American life. However callow it may seem to point it out, being middle-class these days means feeling freaky a lot of the time. *The heebie-jeebies are definitely a problem.* The issues here are deep ones. Home—no less than the cherished "homeland" of dismal fame—seems in desperate need of securing. The precariousness of All We Hold Dear is dinned into our heads daily. It's hardly feckless to feel scared or neurasthenic at times.

Might paging through a shelter magazine be seen—in an analytic spirit and with a certain Freudian forbearance—as a middle-class coping mechanism? As a way of calming the spirit in bizarre and parlous times? House porn, I'm beginning to think, could best be understood as a postmodern equivalent of traditional consolation literature—Boethius meets Mitchell Gold. Though shamelessly of this world—and nowhere more so than in the gluttoned and prodigal U.S.A.—it's as spiritually fraught, one could argue, as the breviaries of old.

Which isn't to say that certain people aren't, for complex reasons, particularly susceptible to the shelter-mag jones. Décor-fixated individuals (and you know who you are), according to Praz, are usually "neurotic, refined, sad people," prone to "secret melancholy" and "hypersensitive nerves." Quaint language aside (he enlists the "mad, lonely spirit" of Ludwig II of Bavaria as a historical example of the syndrome), the claim is weirdly compelling. Readers with the obsessive-compulsive gene—the twenty-first-century version, perhaps, of "hypersensitive nerves"—will be familiar with the low-level yet troublesome anxiety produced when something in a room seems misplaced, askew, or somehow "wrong." I won't be surprised when brain scientists discover the odd little fold in the cerebral cortex that makes

READING LIST

MOMMIES DEAREST, PART 2

Top literary reasons why it sucks to have chic parents

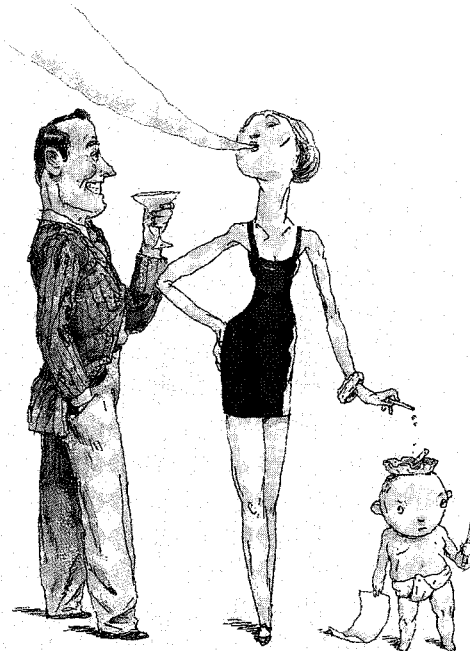
BY SALLY SINGER

(For reasons 1 through 5, see the January/February issue.)

6. They force you to become a smuggler ... so if you happen to visit, say, Paris with them—and if, say, Mom is Carmel Snow, a former editor at *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*—be prepared to cut all the labels out of your new clothes and whistle "Dixie" at Customs. In her biography of Snow, *A Dash of Daring: Carmel Snow and Her Life in Fashion, Art, and Letters*, Penelope Rowlands insists that Snow's three girls were well brought up. Indeed they were—only not by Snow. Want to know how a career woman can "have it all"? Live in the city, banish your children to Long Island and nannies, and drop by on Sunday afternoons (if you happen not to be traveling).

7. They announce breakups in a particularly crushing way ... In Brooke Hayward's *Haywire*, a wackily assembled but terribly sad recollection of her family's propensity for glamour (childhood best buddy: Jane Fonda) and mental illness (both mother and sister killed themselves; brother Bill was committed), the beginnings and ends of relationships are marked by the strangest of statements. Her mother, the actress Margaret Sullivan, tells her children that her divorce from Leland Hayward must be treated "just like going to the bathroom; it's not something you talk to other people about." Years later, Hayward Sr. takes Brooke out for her twenty-second birthday to proclaim his love for Pamela Churchill (later Harriman): "'I've decided to get married again,' he declared. 'But,' I replied, stunned, 'you already are.' 'True,' said Father. 'First I'll have to get a divorce.'"

8. They snarl at you when you fail to get them off-the-market Pepsi Lite, they give you fruit for Christmas, they turn you into a tool of Soviet



propaganda, they try to involve you in joint suicide pacts, they tell you that you were an accident ... Sean Wilsey's sharper-than-a-serpent's-tooth account of his San Francisco childhood, *Oh the Glory of It All*, is a hitherto-unimaginable catalogue of parental don'ts, and features the evillest stepmother since Cinderella. Bar none.

9. They spend Christmas bronzing their thighs in St. Tropez ... while leaving you to open presents with your nanny and assorted staff at the Plaza. Was there ever a more neglected child than Kay Thompson's Eloise (other than, perhaps, Madeline)? What kind of parent would let her child befriend a dumbwaiter? Answer: one whose presence in her daughter's life takes the form, exclusively, of a person with lines of credit at Bergdorf Goodman and Neiman Marcus and rumored friendships with Christian Dior and Coco Chanel.

10. They don't buy Pepperidge Farm Nassaus ... and when you've slashed your wrists with scissors and are bleeding right in front of their noses, as happens to Daphne Merkin's protagonist in *Enchantment*, they continue their phone conversation (in German!). The parents in Merkin's 1984 autobiographical novel are not fabulous, but they are stinkingly rich and suffocatingly narcissistic. The thing with having fancy folks is that it's always about them. No wonder their kids put pen to paper to finally have their say.

Sally Singer is the fashion news and features director at *Vogue*.

JOHN CUNEO



one agitate over slipcovers or jump up and rearrange the furniture.

But along with whatever innate disposition may exist, the typical interiors fanatic almost always has some aesthetic trauma looming up out of the past—a decorative primal scene, so to speak—exacerbating the underlying syndrome. For the legendary American designer Elsie de Wolfe (1865–1950), the so-called First Lady of Interior Decoration, just such a shock awaited her, she recalled in her memoirs, when she returned home one day from school to find that her parents—pious Scottish-Canadian immigrants otherwise deficient in fantasy—had repaired the sitting room of their New York City brownstone in a lurid “[William] Morris design of gray palm-leaves and splotches of bright green and red on a background of dull tan.” Something “that cut like a knife came up inside her,” de Wolfe recollected. “She threw herself on the floor, kicking with stiffened legs as she beat her legs on the carpet.”

The novelettish third person is a nice dramatic touch: Freud’s Dora had nothing on Elsie in the girlish-hysteria department.

And indeed, there’s just such a primal scene in my own childhood: the day my mother—faced with replacing our bedraggled old tweed sofa—decided, in a fit of desperate-divorcée economy, to spray-paint it instead. (When I succumb to rectal cancer, it will no doubt be the result of having sat on this unwholesome piece of

furniture throughout my adolescence.) In a single sunny late-sixties San Diego afternoon—I can still hear the clack-clack of aerosol cans being shaken—our couch went from its normal faded-beige color to a lethal-looking southern California turquoise. That wasn’t the end, though: overcome by a sort of decorative frenzy, she then sprayed the flimsy shelf unit separating the “kitchenette” from the living room in our tiny pink-and-green motel-style apartment—and after that two discarded toys of mine, a hapless pair of plastic palomino ponies. Resplendent in turquoise from forelock



to hoof, Trigger and Buttermilk were subsequently elevated to the unlikely role of room-divider ornaments. No doubt my adult hankering after Zuber *papiers peints*, Omega Workshop textiles, and Andre Arbus *escritoirs* germinated at just this moment.

Now, it's worth considering to what degree decorative trauma functions as a mental screen for more-troubling kinds of distress. Is the interiors mania rooted in deeper childhood travails? Elsie de Wolfe's Calvinist mother seems to have been gruesome enough: she made de Wolfe wear sackcloth pinafores and shipped her off at fifteen to a *Jane Eyre*-style boarding school in Edinburgh. In his notes to the elegant new Rizzoli reprint of de Wolfe's so-called "design bible," *The House in Good Taste* (1913), Hutton Wilkinson, the president of the Elsie de Wolfe Foundation, suggests that the revolutionary decorating philosophy de Wolfe evolved in the first decade of the twentieth century—one favoring simplicity, creamy-white walls, natural light, informal furniture groupings, bright chintzes—had its psychic roots in juvenile pain and estrangement. (De Wolfe "simply didn't like Victorian," Wilkinson writes, because it was "the high style of her sad childhood.")

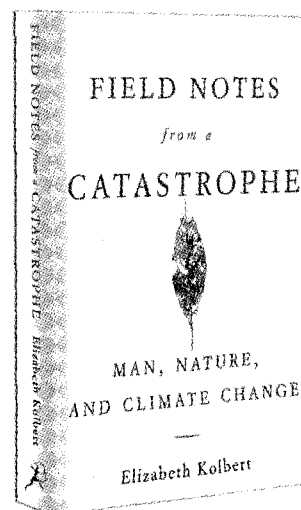
Again, no question but that family ructions—notably my parents' nuclear-war-style divorce when I was seven—left me, like de Wolfe, with a bit of a shelter neurosis. As soon as the papers were filed, my British-born mother yanked me and my little sister out of the standard-issue suburban West Coast middle-class home we had occupied for as long as I could remember and took us off to a dreary seaside bungalow in the U.K. Returning to San Diego three years later—my mother then in flight from British Inland Revenue—we landed in the aforementioned cheesy apartment, the best she could do on the child support she received from my father. I spent my mopey teenage years there like an exiled monarch, dolefully contemplating the spindly 1950s hibiscus-print bamboo armchairs and roll-up window blinds (courtesy

of Buena Vista Apartments management) and lamenting the fate that had befallen us.

The real nightmare, however, was a squalid domicile across town that threatened off and on to become our future home: the "snout house" (a boxy So-Cal tract house with garage and driveway dominating the frontage) owned by the man my mother would later marry—a hapless submariner named Turk, whose previous wife had dropped dead there of alcohol poisoning a few months before my mother met him. The place was my private House of Usher; I worried over the ghastly reality—maternal lack of cash—it represented. And as if to confirm its baleful role in my imaginative life, it was an abode of surpassing ugliness: dank and malodorous, with fake wood paneling and a tattered Snopes-family screen door at the front admitting numerous flies. The only decorative touches were the grimy ashtrays on every surface, a faded Navy photo of the U.S.S. *Roncador* surfacing, and, in one dim corner, a dusty assemblage of bronze baby shoes—one for each of Turk's five wildly delinquent children. Luckily, by the time my mother married him I had already left for college, so I—the female Fauntleroy—never had to live there. Staying overnight was bad enough, though: I have dreams to this day in which the mother who dropped dead emerges from the closet—here, now, in my grown-up bedroom in San Francisco—to enfold me in a noxious and crumbly embrace.

Which brings me back, by a somewhat gothic route, to shelter mags and their allure. One essential part of their appeal, it seems to me, lies precisely in the fact that they proffer—even brazenly tout—an escape from the parental. (The step-parental, too, thank God.) They do this in several ways—perhaps most conspicuously through a glib, repetitious, wonderfully brain-deadening "express the inner you" rhetoric. Now, supposedly no one actually "reads" shelter magazines; you just drivell over the pictures. Patently untrue in my experience: I devour all the writing,

"THE HARD, COLD, SOBERING FACTS ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING. KOLBERT'S *FIELD NOTES FROM A CATASTROPHE* IS NOTHING LESS THAN A *SILENT SPRING* FOR OUR TIME."
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—Sylvia Nasar, author of *A Beautiful Mind*

"Kolbert's calmly persuasive reporting stands out for its sobering clarity...this unbiased overview is a model for writing about an urgent environmental crisis."

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)



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too—such as it is—no matter how fatuous and formulaic. I take special pleasure in the “editor’s welcome”—usually a few brief paragraphs (next to a little picture of said editor) about new decorating trends, the need for beauty in one’s life, how to create a private “sanctuary” for yourself, the meaning of “home,” etc. It’s always the same stupefying tripe, but soothing nonetheless.

Who is this editor? She (rarely he) might best be described as the Un-Mother. She is typically white, middle-aged yet youthful, apparently straight, and seldom much more ethnic-looking than the Polish-American Martha Stewart. She is often divorced, and may (paradoxically) have grown-up children. But her authority is of an oblique, seemingly nontoxic kind—more that of a benevolent older sister or a peppy, stylish aunt than any in-your-face maternal figure. And the therapeutic wisdom she dispenses—almost always in the cozy second person—is precisely that *you don’t have to do what your mother tells you to do*. In fact, your ma can buzz off altogether.

You can now buy lots of nice things and make “your own space,” from which all signs of the past have been expunged.

Yay! No more U.S.S. *Roncador*!

If you enter the words “not your mother’s” on Google, you’ll get nearly 200,000 results, a huge number of which point you immediately toward shelter-mag articles. “Not your mother’s [whatever]” turns out to be an established interiors trope, endlessly recycled in titles, pull quotes, advertisements, photo captions, and the like. “Not Your Mother’s Tableware” is a typical heading—meant presumably to assure you that if you acquire the featured cutlery you will also, metaphorically speaking, be giving your mom the finger. (Other online items that are not your mother’s: wallpaper, mobile homes, Chinette, faucet sponges, slow cookers, backyard orchards, and Tupperware parties. Beyond the realm of interior decoration—it’s nice to learn—you can also avoid your mother’s menopause, divorce, Internet, hysterectomy, book club, Mormon music, hula dance, antibacterial

soap, deviled eggs, and national security. Thank you, Condi.)

“Your House Is You, So Start Reveling in It” is a virtual creed in Shelter-Mag Land, one derived from the holy books of interior design. “You will express yourself in your home, whether you want to or not,” proclaimed the prophet Elsie in *The House in Good Taste*—best to “arrange it so that the person who sees [you] in it will be reassured, not disconcerted.” In *The Personality of a House*, a rather more florid copycat volume from 1930, Emily Post was no less insistent: “[Your home’s] personality should express your personality, just as every gesture you make—or fail to make—expresses your gay animation or your restraint, your old-fashioned conventions, your perplexing mystery, or your emancipated modernism—which-ever characteristics are typically yours.” Narcissism in a go-cup: the ladies say it’s okay.

Now, in 2006, the message is ubiquitous, sloganized, inevitable. “Not Everything in Your Home Is All About You, You, You,” reads an ad for flooring in a recent issue of *Elle Decor*. “Oh, Wait. Yes, It Is.” Unsurprisingly, it is taken for granted that one’s inner life—externalized in décor—will be an improvement on whatever has gone before. “What do you think you want?” asks *Elle Decoration* (September 2005). “A bigger house? A better view? Frette bedlinen? A matching set of original Saarinen dining chairs?” It seems that “you” have very expensive tastes. But that’s fine too, because shelter literature is all about consumption, luxury goods, and the pipe dreams of upward mobility.

When one has pretensions to taste, such dreams can be hard to resist. Out of necessity my own decorating style has long been fairly down-market and bourgeois: your standard Academic-Shabby-Chic-Wood-Floors-Vaguely-Ethnic-Somewhat-Cluttered-Bohemian-Edith-Sitwell-Crossed-With-Pottery-Barn-Squeaky-Dog-Toys-Everywhere-Eccentric-Anglophile-Lesbian. (The last two elements being signified by various grubby Vita Sackville-West first editions on the shelves. No one else on

MODERN AMERICAN HOUSES: 50 YEARS OF DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

the Internet seems to want them.) Yet raffishness notwithstanding, the entire visual scheme is as fraught with socio-economic symbolism as any. Having been plucked out of the (semi-) prosperous middle class as a child, I have spent thirty years or so trying to wiggle my way back in. Indeed, to the degree that such mobility is possible on an academic salary, I've sought fairly relentlessly to upgrade to even higher status—1920s-Artistic-British-Boho-With-Inherited-Income has usually been the target look, as if Augustus John and Virginia Woolf had mated. (The “British” part has no doubt been a way of renegotiating childhood fiascos on my own terms.) Say the word “Bloomsbury” or “Charleston” and I become quite tremulous with longing.

That the “express yourself” ethos of the shelter mag is both illogical and manipulative should go without saying. While encouraging you to find your “personal style,” the Un-Mother also wants to show you *how*. Even my own fanatically considered décor, I'm forced to admit, may be part of some greedy stranger's business plan—a version of that nostalgic “vintage” or “Paris flea market” style heavily promoted to urban college-educated women of my generation throughout the United States and Western Europe over the past decade or so. (Other incessantly marketed “looks” now vying for dominance in Shelter-Mag Land: “mid-century modern”—a variety of Baby Boomer Rat Pack retro distinguished by funky space-age design, Case Study houses, pony skins on the floor; and, if you're lucky, lots of Eames, Mies, and Corbu—and the more minimalist, Asian-inspired “W Hotel” look, involving wenge wood, stark-white walls, spa bathrooms, dust-mite-free bedding, solitary orchids in raku pots, etc. *Chacun à son goût* and all that, but the latter mode—like the frigid minimalism of the British cult architect John Pawson—always strikes me as simply the latest twist on twentieth-century fascist design.) But whether my never-ending quest for antique finials, faded bits of toile de Jouy, old postcards, and other quirky “flea-market finds” is a product

of disposition or suggestion, I am, I realize, as much a slave to commodity fetishism as any McMansion-owning reader of *Architectural Digest*—hideous bible of parvenus from the Hamptons to Malibu.

Resentful, matrophobic, pretentious, gullible: could the shelter-lit addict be any less appealing? Unfortunately, yes, as a brief foray—into Shelter-Mag Land's heart of darkness, its paranoid psychic core—will reveal. Here the real-world rooms on display—static, pristine, and seemingly uninhabited—are key. To be “at home” in the World of Interiors, one rapidly gathers, is to bask in the privacy of your own space, serene and unabashed, while the rest of the world goes *kaboom* all around you. (Not for nothing does the industry term “shelter magazine” play subliminally on “bomb shelter.” Self-fortification is one of the goals here; likewise the psychic eradication of other people.)

Some shelter-lit purveyors are tough-minded enough to cop to it—that the urge to “project the self” through décor can be deeply allied with misanthropy. “I live inside my head,” the decorator Rose Tarlow declares in *The Private House* (2001), “often oblivious to the world outside myself. I see only what I wish to see.” In her own home, she acknowledges, other people aren't really part of the scene.

I know there are times when we plan our houses as much for the pleasure of our friends as for ourselves, because we wish for their enjoyment, and rely on their appreciation and praise—especially their praise. Thankfully that stage of my life has passed!

Having now become “interested in a home only for myself,” she would like nothing better, she says, than to live in a “nun's cell”—a sort of little medieval crypt-world. (“I imagine a bed covered in a creamy, heavy hemp fabric in a tiny room that has rough, white-washed plaster walls, a small Gothic window, a stone sink; outside a bird sings. Peace prevails.”) The book's illustrations—chill, austere, and undeniably gorgeous—give form to the tomb-

NEW FICTION

Finds and flops

BY CHRISTINA SCHWARZ

It's hard to believe that this poignant examination of long marriage is Dean's first novel, so subtly does she develop the relationships among her characters and so skillfully does she balance delight and despair. Plucking two couples—one English and elderly, one Belgian and middle-aged—from their domestic routines and planting them on holiday at a Caribbean resort, she offers a change of scene as an opportunity to determine whether each is together merely because of habit and a long-ago promise or because of some stronger bond.

Dean peels back the skin of these marriages with an unflinching lack of sentimentality and an immense talent for close observation and evocative, often poetic detail. She can reach straight into a character's heart, damning her instantly but discreetly in a single sentence. She can redeem (albeit only momentarily) just as swiftly: “In spite of her cold and hard mind, her mother's heart arched like a swallow making a circle of the sky, turning south for the winter.” All of Dean's characters—the stubbornly unfashionable old English couple, the jaded European nouveaux riches, the arrogant Americans, the unpredictable Irish-by-way-of-South-Africa born-again Christian, the bumbling resort manager whose fantasies resemble car commercials—are wonderfully true to their circumstances but are also vividly and consistently themselves, not “types.”

In less skillful hands, the plot—and there is a good, strong plot—might have foundered in bathos, but Dean adroitly sticks to the high road; although she afflicts her characters with terminal cancer, Alzheimer's, alcoholism, and adultery, these trials, rather than defining the people who suffer them, serve to reveal their fiber. The ending is unexpected, yet entirely deserved. Dean has produced an ideal novel, right out of the box.

Christina Schwarz is the author of the novels *Drowning Ruth* and *All Is Vanity*.



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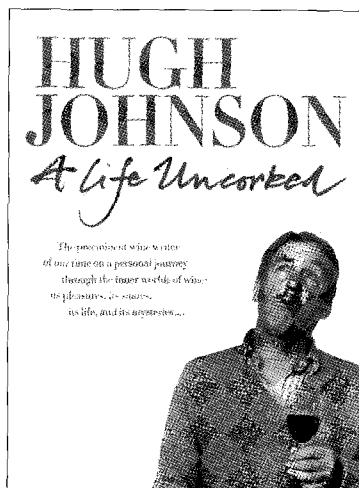
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like aesthetic: not one of the exquisite rooms shown (all designed by Tarlow) has a human being in it.

Shelter-Mag Land is a place in which other people are edited out—removed from the picture, both literally and metaphorically, so that one is free to project oneself, forever and a day, into the fantasy spaces on view. In any given interiors piece this "disappearing" of other people is usually a two-part process—beginning retrospectively, as it were, with the ritual exorcism of the last owner before the current one. Former owners invariably have atrocious taste, one discovers, and every trace of them must be removed. When the former owner is also the Mother in Need of Banishment, heroic measures are necessary. A 2004 article in *The New York Times Style Magazine* has a telling item about how Goldie Hawn's daughter, the actress Kate Hudson, bought "the Los Angeles house she grew up in" precisely in order to gut the interior and remodel it in "her own image." No Goldie vestiges will be allowed to remain. "Goldie's taste is more classic," notes a male designer assisting Hudson. "Kate wants to turn everything on its ear." Don't look now, Private Benjamin—the kid's just decoratively cleansed you.

But other people need cleansing too—most urgently the lucky oinkers now in possession. It is common for interiors magazines—higher-end ones like *World of Interiors* especially—to suppress the names and images of current owners. There are exceptions, of course: *Elle Decor*, for some reason, likes to run pictures of blissed-out property owners—usually Ralph Lauren-ish white people relaxing on patios, cuddling their French bulldogs, or flourishing salad tongs in a gleaming Corian-countertopped kitchen. In some cases, especially when he's gay and humpy, the designer responsible for the new décor will be shown lounging about the premises looking highly pleased with himself, like a porn star who's just delivered big-time.

And small children—especially if beautiful, blonde, and under five—

sometimes get a pass, though they are liable to appear in curiously fey and stylized ways. For several years now I've been keeping tabs on a shelter-mag cliché I call the Blurred Child Picture: a light-filled shot of some airy urban loft, all-stainless kitchen, or quaint Nantucket cottage in which the child of the house is shown—barefoot, pink, and perfect—either whizzing by in the background or bouncing joyfully on a bed. The face and limbs are often fuzzy, as if to suggest a sort of generic kidness in motion. These hallucinatory urchins usually turn out to bear excruciatingly hip names—Samantha, Cosmo, Zoe, and Miles are current favorites—and seem as branded and objectified as the furnishings around them. The ongoing reproductive anxieties of young, white, middle-class American professional women—a crucial segment of the shelter-magazine demographic—would seem to prompt such wish-fulfillment imagery: here's your new space and a designer child to put in it.

But the ideal room in Shelter-Mag Land is unpeopled—stark, impervious, and preternaturally still—like the haunted castle in Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*. As aficionados know, just about every room shown in a shelter magazine has been meticulously staged by unseen stylists: flowers placed just so; covetable objects illuminated; expensive art books arranged on tables; takeout menus, sex toys, and drug paraphernalia discreetly removed. The place is usually flooded with heavenly light—as if an angel had just descended outside, or a nuclear flash had irradiated the environs. When windows in a room are visible, one typically can't see through them: they remain opaque, like weirdly glowing light boxes. The unearthly illumination from without is mesmerizing. Whether or not one likes the space on view, one finds oneself absorbed, drawn in by the eerie promise of peace and immutability. It's seductive, sanitized, calm-verging-on-dead: mausoleum chic.

The standard interiors shot might be categorized as a degraded form of still life—a kind of iconography distin-

guished, traditionally, by the absence of human subjects. And as with the painted form, the viewer is faced with puzzles and paradoxes. Confronting the perfectly styled objects before us, are we, the spectators, in the presence of life or death? Where are the human beings? In the traditional *nature morte* (the French name for the mode is telling) the depiction of food and drink—fruit, bread, goblets of wine, limp game birds—alluded to organic processes (here's something good to eat), but a “life” inextricably dependent on the death and decay of other living things. In the most profound and unflinching still-life arrangements (Zurbaran's, say, or those of the seventeenth-century Dutch school) the viewer is suavely implicated in the cycle of mortality. A human skull sometimes appears, *Hamlet*-style, as an explicit and sobering *memento mori*.

There's one big problem here, and you don't need to rent old Ingmar Bergman movies to see it. There's a *real* skeleton at the door, and whoa—looks like he's aiming to get in. He was first spotted in Shelter-Mag Land, scythe in hand, one sunny September morning a few years ago, and recently he's turned up again—in true *Seventh Seal* fashion—in one of its favorite “style destinations.” (Two days into the unfolding Katrina disaster, *New Orleans Style: Past and Present*, the most lavish of recent shelter books devoted to the doomed southern city, had sold out on Amazon.com. I know: I was trying to order it.)

It's fair to say that even while seeking to exploit readers' existential fears, the shelter-lit industry has itself been traumatized over the past five years, its Benday-dots dream world cracked open by explosions from without. The first shock to the system was 9/11, an event so cognitively strange, so incomprehensible according to shelter-mag logic, that what to do about it—rhetorically, psychically—remains unresolved in most interiors publications. What sort of high-gloss feature to run when other people not only won't go away but also want to blow your trendy “sanctuary” to bits? “Home,” after all, is what terrorists set

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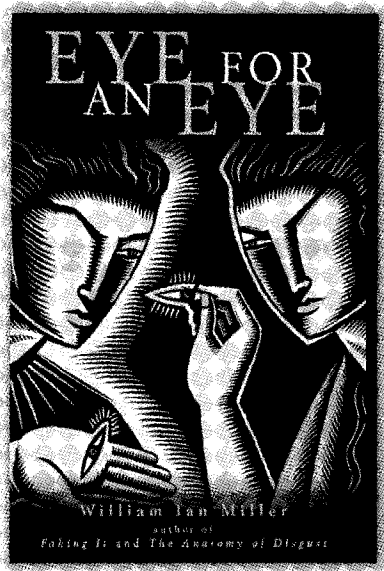
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Jack Hannah in *You Will Not Taste Death: Jesus and Epicureanism* recognizes the notes as chronologically ordered and correlative with the skeletal history used in the *Gospel of Mark*. Hannah provides all the text of *Thomas* and all Marcan context, and upon this develops a narrative about Jesus that is tenably historical.

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out to destroy: the everyday illusion of comfort and safety, the rolling-along-as-usual feeling that is bourgeois life. Floods and fire and civic breakdown in the Gulf Coast states put a further grisly spin on the problem. It's hard to focus on window treatments when bodies are floating by outside.

It's true that in the aftermath of 9/11 at least one gallant Un-Mother—to her credit—tried to address the matter as best she could. Dominique Browning, the melancholic editor of Condé Nast's *House and Garden* and a dead ringer for the Lady of Shalott, ran a number of columns in which she wrote awkwardly yet movingly about the effect of the attacks on her mental world. These columns were painful—I remember starting to cry while reading one—not least because one saw Browning struggling against the banality of the context in which she wrote. Such pathos in Shelter-Mag Land was a shock: like finding a dismembered corpse in a beautiful meadow. *Et in Arcadia ego* indeed.

A similar pathos suffused a *Metropolitan Home* essay by Emily Prager ("Safe as Houses," September 2004)—the only interiors article I've come across so far to tackle 9/11 at any length. Prager, a longtime Greenwich Village resident who witnessed the collapse of the South Tower, candidly recounted how the day's events left her "wounded in my sense of home." The piece ended with its author in a state of panicky ambivalence, wanting to flee New York yet unable to follow through on any of the fantastical moving plans she kept devising. Scarcely a comforting endpoint—but at least Prager seemed able to articulate her confusion.

Other responses, however, have been less honest and sometimes freakishly dissociated. For example, the editor of *Elle Decoration* (a publication aimed largely at fashion-conscious working women in their twenties and thirties) recently offered this schizoid hodgepodge of girl talk and *carpe diem*:

Colour. Pattern. Decoration. Ornamentation. It's all coming back. I think it's to do with celebrating life—perhaps

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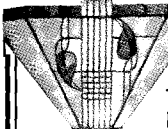
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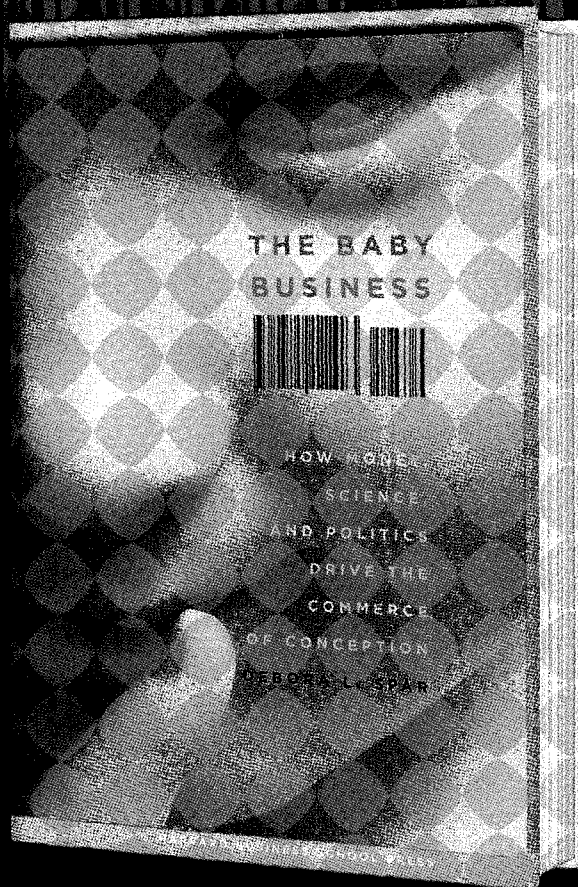
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it's because, in these terrorist-aware times, we're more conscious than ever that this life isn't a rehearsal, it's the main event. And what simpler way to add some joy and pattern to your life than with flowers.

Though priding itself on being hip, even the House & Home section of *The New York Times* has gone a bit bipolar lately. Opposite a jaunty piece about co-op residents catfighting online (December 2, 2004), the editors ran a full-page public-service ad for a government disaster-readiness Web site, complete with a huge picture of a grim-faced FDNY firefighter and apocalyptic copy. ("After a terrorist attack your first instinct may be to run. That may be the worst thing you could do.") The emotional dissonance was nerve-jangling, corrosive, surreal. Maybe the best thing, after all, would be to go round to the neighbors and make up with them.

Yet the most disturbing case of 9/11 schizophrenia involves the now defunct *nest*. Often heralded as the most iconoclastic interiors publication since Fleur Cowles's short-lived *Flair*, in the 1950s, *nest* set out to be everything the ordinary shelter magazine was not: louche, sly, sexy, so dark and downtown in sensibility it was funny—an interiors rag for the John Waters set. Typical features had to do with Hitler's decorating tastes, the phallus-studded home of Miss Plaster Caster (she who once made plaster moulds of rock-star penises), Lucy and Ricky's sound-stage "apartment" on *I Love Lucy*, how to arrange kitty boxes when you live with 114 cats, and the joy of clear-plastic sofa covers. My all-time favorite piece was about the Toys "R" Us-style "playrooms" of "adult babies"—men and women who find sexual gratification by wearing diapers and lying in oversized baby cribs. Every now and then amid the camp one would encounter authentic blue-chip writing: Muriel Spark on "Bed Sits I Have Known," John Banville on Gianni Versace's Miami villa (outside which the designer was shot), the poet Eileen Myles on sleeping on a city sidewalk in a cardboard box.

are we selling babies?



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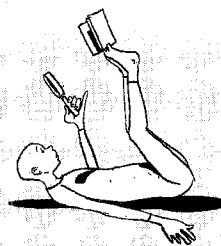
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A CLOSE READ

What makes good writing good

BY CHRISTINA SCHWARZ



"Woolf was not a romantic, not a celebrant of that getting lost that is erotic love, in which the beloved becomes an invitation to become who you secretly, dormant, like a locust underground waiting for the seventeen-year call, already are in hiding, that love for the other that is also a desire to reside in your own mystery in the mystery of others. Her getting lost was solitary, like Thoreau's."

—from **A Field Guide to Getting Lost**, by Rebecca Solnit (Viking)

Like Solnit's subject in these essays, "getting lost," her first sentence here is indirect both in its approach—she is defining what Virginia Woolf is not—and in its style. Its progress is hardly linear as she interrupts it to redefine and modify her idea and in the middle devotes a grand flourish to an aspect of the sentence that isn't even the point. The sentence seems nearly to run away with its author: a wonderfully lively effect. Particularly animating is the locust simile,

with its vivid specificity—"underground," "seventeen-year"—and its concreteness (unique in this argument about abstractions). Inactive verbs, generally deadly, here provide restraint. Solnit also tames the chaos by repeating words—becomes/become, other/others, mystery/mystery. And if neither of these measures is enough, the final sentence—short, tight, direct—gives a firm tug on the reins.

Christina Schwarz is the author of the novels *Drowning Ruth* and *All Is Vanity*.

The magazine was quite stupendously mannered—rather like Ronald Firbank trawling for hunky handymen at Home Depot. Yet manner proved bootless when *nest* fell victim to grotesque and unfortunate coincidence. Attached to the cover of the fatal thirteenth issue—Summer 2001—was a black silk mourning ribbon, the sort of thing one might find on a Victorian scrapbook or photo album. (*nest* regularly violated ordinary packaging conventions.) On the cover itself was a cleverly Photoshopped image of the U.S. Capitol wrapped in a huge white shroud with black-and-white funeral bunting. It transpired that Rei Kawakubo, the fashion force behind Comme des Garçons, had been asked by *nest*'s editor and presiding genius, Joseph Holtzman, to design a "mourning" dress for the Capitol building, precisely to ready it for "whatever calamity may befall us in the future." The shroud tarp and bunting were the result: Christo meets Edgar Allan Poe.

The "national grief" theme was playfully reflected in the issue's editorial content: one item had to do with

the planning and decoration of Abraham Lincoln's funeral cortege, another with Sarah Bernhardt's coffin bed.

One can hardly overstate the spookiness of it all—for those morbid enough to notice—when the imagined "tragedy" came to pass a few weeks later. The Summer 2001 *nest* suddenly seemed ghoulishly prescient—akin to the British journalist W. T. Stead's uncanny 1892 short story about a White Star ocean liner's sinking in the ice fields of the North Atlantic (Stead would go down on the *Titanic* twenty years later), or "King's Cross," a melancholy Pet Shop Boys song of 1987 that seemed to predict the terrible Underground fire at that ill-starred station two months later. Odder still, however, was the official *nest* response to 9/11.

There wasn't one.

No comment on Kawakubo and the shrouded Capitol; no mention of the attacks; no nuttin'. Given *nest*'s Manhattan address and relentless downtown feel, the absence of immediate acknowledgment was creepy—as if the magazine had suffered a brain injury and been rendered selectively mute.

The blankness and blockage never went away. *nest* carried on for several more years, through the Fall 2004 issue, but one couldn't help feeling that the debunking zest had gone out of it—the punkish will to provoke seemed tainted and damaged. I lost some of my enthusiasm for the magazine after the 9/11 watershed: *nest*, it seemed, was just too hip to be human.

In retrospect the aphasia seems part of a more pervasive syndrome. Despite the rad profile, *nest* was as knee-deep in bathos and bourgeois denial as any other shelter mag. But who among us isn't? How could anyone reconcile the scarifying truth—all men are mortal—with that illusion of calm and safety to which most of us still regularly aspire in everyday life? Regardless of means, status, or political investment, just about everyone craves warmth, light, four walls, and some bits of furniture—a *shelter*, in a word, from miseries we know are out there and others still to come. Our vulnerability is too extreme to be "integrated" in any supposedly therapeutic fashion.

So we devise psychic buffers. The habits of bourgeois life—first adumbrated in Northern Europe as early as the sixteenth century—have been for some time the buffer of choice, civilization's all-purpose comfort-and-happiness maximizer. But the bourgeois outlook could hardly be called valiant or hardheaded: it's all about *not* staring death in the face. Under its sway one seeks a world without pain. The search is doomed, of course—the "safe house" a house of cards. But maybe we needn't start thinking about *that* yet.

I find myself hung up on the predicament—how to strike a balance between the longing for security (that infantile need on which shelter mags batten) and the more grown-up recognition that any "serenity" to be achieved is illusory, or at best fleeting. I'm a dawdler on the road to unhappy consciousness. Yet there are signs—this essay among them, perhaps—that I've started to wean myself of the more brainless aspects of my addiction. I've let some of the crap subscriptions

lapse—*Old House Interiors* (too boring-Berkeley-in-the-seventies) and the ludicrous, vamping *Architectural Digest*. *House Beautiful* had started to irk me: its former male editor—odd and smarmy—was always twaddling on in fake-folksy manner about his adorable daughter “Madison.” But is he gay or straight?—that’s what I want to know.

And I’m getting tired of the whole Let’s-Pretend-There’s-Nothing-Wrong trip; it’s become so breathless and false. Death has lately been popping up rather explicitly in Shelter-Mag Land, but hidden in plain sight, as it were—like the purloined letter. Something one might call “taxidermic chic,” for example, has become a huge fad: cow skulls, fossils, mounted “jackalope” heads, stuffed rodents in doll clothes, lizards embalmed in varnish or the like—all deployed as “edgy” urban décor. (Trendy rag-and-bone-cum-interiors shops like Evolution in SoHo and Paxton Gate in San Francisco make a bundle out of this strange and desiccated style.)

I’ve even had bouts of outright revulsion. The worst came not long ago as I was innocently paging through *Homes and Gardens*. I had found a feature—instantly mesmerizing—about a renovated English farmhouse built in 1604. My sort of wattle-and-daub thing exactly! One could just see Vanessa Bell in it, paintbrushes in hand. I was fascinated to read how the current owners, a handsome couple with children, had kept “the carcasses of the original kitchen” in the interest of authenticity. And I also loved the milky gray “period” color chosen for the drawing room: a Jacobean hue named “Silken Flank.” But the *pièce de résistance* was undoubtedly the Vintage Hospital Bed—late-nineteenth-century and loaded with pricey Steiff teddy bears—taking pride of place in their daughter’s bedroom.

A lovely white iron bedstead: funky, fresh-looking, impeccable shabby chic. I wanted it immediately. But suddenly I found myself imagining all the people who had slept, and possibly died, in this particular bed over the past hundred years. In fact, the more I looked

at it, the more it reminded me of those metal beds you see lined up in haunting photographs of First World War military hospitals, in which a ward full of grievously injured young men—heads bandaged, empty pajama sleeves pinned up—lie propped against pillows and (if they can) glumly regard the camera. Teddy bears notwithstanding, one could almost smell the carbolic. How many blind or limbless soldiers, I wondered, had succumbed in little Scarlett’s bed?

From there my thoughts went naturally on to the avian-flu epidemic of 1918–19. That appalling global contagion killed more than 20 million people: surely one or two of them must have expired in this particular bedstead? Bird-to-human influenza viruses have been in the news, of course, so the speculation was not unduly morbid. If the earthquakes, floods, or dirty bombs don’t get us, I gather, the Asian poultry will.

In Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, there’s an unforgettable passage in which the ill-starred heroine, brooding on mortality, wonders on what “sly and unseen” day she will die. “Of that day, doomed to be her terminus in time through all the ages, she did not know the place in month, week, season or year.” Tess could have used www.deathclock.com, where you fill out a health questionnaire and get back your exact date of death. Having discovered when mine will be—January 28, 2038—I’ve found myself wondering lately *where* I will die. On a city street? In an overturned car? In some dark and fathomless polar sea into which my plane has crashed? But what about at home, in bed, Evian on the nightstand and Wally the minidachshund snoring stertorously under the covers? Given my “home” fixation, that would be an especially poetic fate. Will my 400-thread-count Egyptian-cotton bed linens be any comfort to me then? And what about the teak milking stool? If she ever knew—and I doubt she did—the Un-Mother isn’t telling. ▀

Terry Castle is a professor of English at Stanford. Her books include The Apparitional Lesbian and Courage, Mon Amie.

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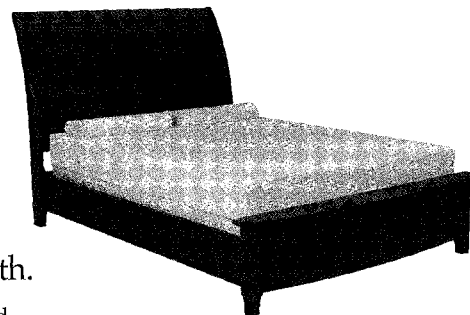
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BOOKS

What's Left?

A new book by the West's most influential Marxist shows him to be both "the most profound essayist wielding a pen" and on the wrong side of history

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In 1986 the New School in New York managed to assemble a quartet of scholars to discuss the state of "radical history." This must have been the only occasion upon which Americans could have witnessed Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, and Edward Thompson—the three giants of the English Marxist school—on the same platform. The other, younger participant, Perry Anderson, modestly refers to them in this book as "the three *dayens*." Yet by then he had already caught and held the attention of a new audience, with the publication of two works of macro-historiography, *Passages From Antiquity to Feudalism* and *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. And it was his own contribution on that occasion that far outshone those of the senior members. Brusquely asserting that radical history had reached a point of diminishing returns (how many more "out groups" really remained to have their forgotten struggles unearthed?), Anderson offered the challenge of a "history of possibility": a grand narrative of missed opportunities that would avoid the merely counterfactual. Nearly two decades later, he has yet to take himself up on this intriguing proposal (or even to allude to it in his mention of the event itself). But he has succeeded in extending his critique of radical and conservative ideas alike, to the point where he must be accounted the most polymathic, and at the same time the most profound, essayist currently wielding a pen. His handling of the relationship between history and philosophy, and historians and philosophers, would—if the word did not

possess a connotation of the meretricious—deserve to be called "dazzling."

It is now a little more than forty years since, in partnership with Tom Nairn, Anderson authored a set of historical theses about the entropic state of British institutions. This enterprise, and the mordant exchange with Edward Thompson to which it gave rise, marked the emergence of a new sort of polemic: English yet strongly inflected with "Continental" sources and comparisons. Under Anderson's stewardship, the *New Left Review* became a journal of international renown, with himself as *primus inter pares* of a brilliant and varied editorial *équipe*. Perhaps a little volatile in its politics—the later sixties saw some flirtations with modish Third Worldism, and even a

willingness to be gulled by the neo-Stalinist charlatan Louis Althusser—and sometimes overfond of opacity in prose, the *NLR* strove to uphold a staunch internationalism and an independence from the mental categories of the Cold War.

Relaunching the magazine for the new millennium, Anderson wrote a landmark editorial. By the year 2000, the communist "alternative" had itself fallen victim to an irreconcilable conflict between its forces and relations of production. In Britain, it had been Mrs. Thatcher, not the Left, who had understood the archaic nature of British institutions and undertaken the upending of consensus. Postmodernism had etiolated the generation of the sixties; the radical ideas were coming from the Right. Anderson took all these developments and faced them

SPECTRUM:
From Right to Left
in the World of Ideas
by Perry Anderson
Verso

YIORGOS KARAHAIS/REUTERS/CORBIS

GERMANY

Top ten works of nonfiction as of December 2005, based on sales data published in *Der Spiegel*.

1. Reunion in Barsaloi, by Corinne Hofmann. The author returns to her former home in Kenya after fourteen years away. A dramatic family reunion mixed with African politics and exotic landscape.

2. The End of Fun, by Peter Hahne. Society will be healthier when we all stop laughing and grow up. A jeremiad against the young and the happy.

3. The Little Doctor, by Dietrich Grönemeyer. A thorough and smart introduction to human anatomy for kids ages twelve and up.

4. Memories 1982–1990, by Helmut Kohl. The last chancellor of West Germany looks back at the years leading up to reunification.

5. A Briefer History of Time, by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. A revised and simplified edition of the classic cosmology primer by the current occupant of Isaac Newton's old job.

6. Schott's Food and Drink Miscellany, by Ben Schott. Eclectic facts and figures about food and beverage you never knew you wanted to know until you knew them.

7. The Triangle of Life, by Uwe Karstädt and Horst Janson. Homeopathic remedies for naturally curing depression, pain, and illness.

8. Love Yourself, by Eva-Maria Zurhorst. Why nearly all relationships can flourish if you start with yourself and work outward.

9. Ripped Off and Cared For to Death, by Markus Breitscheidel. Unveiling the dark, disturbing side of old-age homes in Germany.

10. Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, by Jared Diamond. From the Mayas to the Easter Islanders, Diamond analyzes the factors that have determined how human cultures have thrived or become extinct.

—R. JAY MAGILL JR.

as they actually were. For the first time in its history, capitalism, he conceded, was without a rival, let alone a challenger. Neither a socialist state nor a conscious working class existed in opposition to the market economy. Moreover, the “Left” intellectuals had implicitly abdicated even at the level of ideas, resorting to campus isolation and adopting “standards of writing that would have left Marx or William Morris speechless.” In a marvelously lucid earlier essay (available in his previous collection *A Zone of Engagement*), Anderson had been one of the very few Marxists to take seriously the work of Francis Fukuyama on “the end of history.” And he had been on the scene in Moscow when Boris Yeltsin applied the quietus to Russian Communism. Some comrades began to mutter ominously about the *What's Left Review* ...

I was at first disappointed by the apparent banality of the title of this new collection. The use of “spectrum” is one of the hoariest and most conventional means of describing the demarcations of allegiance and alignment. (To take a salient current case that Anderson chooses to evade, the so-called neo-conservatives are attacked most of all for their impetuous radicalism and their willingness to “destabilize”; if this is not exactly Left, it is certainly not Right, either, as the paleolithic Right is the first to point out.) However, some continuum is necessary for the arrangement and subdivision of these pieces, which extend from what Anderson terms “the Intransigent Right” (of Michael Oakeshott, Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and Friedrich August von Hayek) through the center-Right and center-Left (of Ferdinand Mount and Timothy Garton Ash), the wavering or “adjustable” Left (of Jürgen Habermas, Norberto Bobbio, and John Rawls), and the “Vanquished Left” (of the aforementioned Hobsbawm and Thompson, with additional roles for Sebastiano Timpanaro and Robert Brenner). In his preface to the discussion of this latter group, Anderson surely furnishes

a clue to his own fidelities by writing: “But to be defeated and to be bowed are not the same. None of these writers has lowered his head before the victors. If a dividing line is wanted between what has become the Center and remains the Left, it would lie here.”

The immediate problem with that statement is that it appears to negate, or at the very least to contradict, the important admissions made in that definitive *NLR* editorial of 2000. Can Anderson really be saying that true leftism consists in proudly refusing to acknowledge historical eclipse? It would be difficult to confect a less Marxist position. Yet there is something of the cavalier and the quixotic about him: wedded to the classics in matters of literature; Anglo-Irish by provenance and Etonian by education; the man who first alerted me to the finesse of Anthony Powell as social historian as well as novelist. Occasionally his prose contains asides of an extraordinary loftiness. “I detest pubs,” Anderson tersely informs us, while on another page he deploys the beautifully feudal and anachronistic term “caitiff” to describe the lowly officials of the Irish Republic.

The full difficulty takes time to disclose itself. Anderson perhaps conflates too much by placing Oakeshott, Schmitt, Strauss, and Hayek in one category (Oakeshott could arguably be called an authentic reactionary; Hayek actually wrote an essay, which Anderson elides, on why he was *not* a conservative; Schmitt compromised with National Socialism; Strauss fled from it), but as a short course on the shades and tones of modern intellectual conservatism, the essay could hardly be bettered. In his discussion of the British Tory constitutionalist (and nephew of Anthony Powell) Ferdinand Mount, as with his dissection of Timothy Garton Ash, his exegetical skill and his impatience with waffle and euphemism are harnessed to superb effect. It is when addressing the “Adjustable Left” that Anderson—one of whose favorite terms of

approbation is “cool”—becomes less objective and more sarcastic.

It is a notable fact that at different times and in different ways Habermas, Bobbio, and Rawls, three of the most important intellectuals of the international Left, have endorsed the deployment of American military force. Removing Saddam Hussein from Kuwait or Slobodan Milosevic from Bosnia or Kosovo, or removing them from power altogether, has struck members of this trio as at least a defensible objective. Not so Anderson, for whom the invocation of human rights or international law by Washington is the sheerest effrontery. Using the word “adjustable” of his enemies in this regard is more than a question of exploring some of the inconsistencies of their positions, which as a matter of fact he does with his accustomed deftness. It is a clear insinuation that they are making their peace with power and orienting their “independent” minds toward the grand new imperial hegemon.

The undergirding assumption—that American imperialism remains, if I may so condense it, the primary enemy—is never actually set out or justified. This omission is a pity for two reasons: Anderson has for years lived and taught in the United States, and does not exhibit the snobbish yet lumpen contempt for American society that is so often found on the European Left; and it would certainly be fascinating to see his full attention engaged on the irony that the United States is simultaneously the most conservative and the most radicalizing force on the planet. A few years ago, when we jointly addressed a gathering in New York, he startled me by announcing that he thought the Confederacy should have been allowed to secede. His reasoning was elegant enough—slavery was historically doomed in any case; two semi-continental states would have been more natural; American expansionism would have been checked; Lincoln was a bloodthirsty Bismarckian *étatiste* and megalomaniac—but it was nonetheless remarkable to hear such a

direct attack on the thinking and writing of Marx and Engels, who had been 100 percent for Lincoln and the Union and who had identified America as the country of future progress as surely as they had located Russia as the heartland of backwardness and despotism.

I had by no means forgotten this disagreement, but it came back to me with renewed force when I read Anderson denouncing “NATO’s attack on Yugoslavia,” and later the assault of the Coalition on “Iraq.” One must say at once that, whatever room there is for disagreement about both interventions, it is slightly disgraceful to see a socialist and a humanist echoing the claims made by aggressive and chauvinist dictatorships. Slobodan Milosevic naturally wanted to identify his “Greater Serbia” with the Yugoslav idea, and Saddam Hussein’s rule in Baghdad is one of the grossest cases on record of *l’état c’est moi*, but neither aggrandizement deserves to be taken at face value. And is it not still more extraordinary that a man will overlook the rights of Bosnians, Kosovars, and Kurds and yet assert the self-determination principle on behalf of the Southern planocracy? A *New Left Review* editorial in 2003 announced that the need of the hour was solidarity with the “resistance” in Iraq, Afghanistan, and—yes—the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea. If *this* is “what’s Left,” it can and must be said that a certain sort of Marxism has mutated from being defensively conservative into being outright reactionary—in both declensions of the term placing itself on the “wrong” side of history.

The honorable conservatism of Anderson’s style—and I do not say this out of any wish or need to be fair—is beautifully exhibited in the coda of this collection, a self-contained essay titled “An Anglo-Irishman in China.” Here is an account of Anderson’s own father’s dedicated work for the Chinese Maritime Customs Service; a commitment to China that lasted from the beginning of the First World War to the heat of the Second. We are

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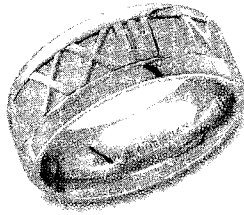
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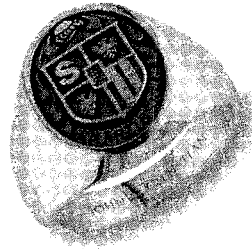
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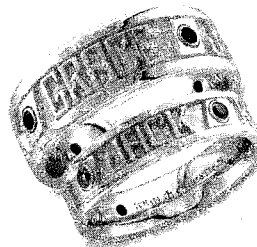
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introduced to a dedicated and sensitive man who "objectively" conducts the work of exploitation but who subjectively insists on the highest standards of probity and professionalism. (In an almost perfect moment of capitalist rationality, we discover that the belligerent powers of 1914—Britain, France, and Germany—did not allow their commercial proxies in the Chinese "concessions" to dissolve their common interest by any foolish quarrel of the sort that was then wrecking European civilization.) Here is a bravura interleaving of the micro with the macro: Anderson *père* conducts love affairs with different women and with Chinese culture, and keeps the civil-service banner as unstained as possible, all while eventually helping to administer subventions from the Japanese aggressor; in effect a servant of the British Crown, he stays in contact with Ireland and quietly supports the Sinn Féin and Home Rule cause. Between Hong Kong and Lungchow, often apparently supervising attacks on the customs collectors, flits the figure of the diminutive Communist Deng Xiaoping ...

In his summoning of the past and his attention to family secrets, Anderson *files* almost deliberately emulates the laconic yet precise manner of his literary hero Anthony Powell. One wishes that all history could be written as "coolly" as this.

Now, and thanks largely to Deng Xiaoping, China is a capitalist and militarist power of a high and imposing order. Its attitude to the exploitation of its own people is pitiless. It exerts claims on neighboring states as discrepant as India and Vietnam. Its UN veto is employed to thwart American "hegemonism" at every turn, and was part of the support system for Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein. Anderson's father was obliged to keep two sets of books, as it were. It would seem a waste of talent if the same had to be said for his brilliant son. 

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist for Vanity Fair.

ANSWERS TO THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY PUZZLER

B	E	A	C	H	C	A	I	M	A	N	S	U
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PURSUIITS & RETREATS

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FOOD

Open for Business

A post-Katrina visit to the restaurants of New Orleans, where eating out has become essential group therapy

BY CORBY KUMMER

In December I had dinner with friends at Lilette, a French bistro with exceptionally polished food on Magazine Street, in New Orleans. The friends, the menu, and the well-heeled, old-line crowd were identical to those at a dinner I'd had at the same restaurant in late July. If anything, the room had a brighter gleam, and the food

was even better than before—more focused, as if the cooks were taking a special, private pleasure in doing what they know how to do. The only visible differences from my visit five months earlier were the view through the plate-glass windows of lined-up branches, disembodied kitchen cabinets, and mattresses heaped on the sidewalk, and

a bright-pink sign from the Office of Public Health taped to the front door: APPROVED FOR RE-OPENING FOLLOWING HURRICANE KATRINA.

Of course, much was very different. Our young waiter had run several city magazines that vanished with the storm; he came back because he didn't want to leave the city. Other friends at a table I later joined talked of how many times they had moved in the past three months, the gas and hot water that were still sometime things, and whether their jobs would continue and they could keep paying the rent, which rose after the storm. The bonhomie at our long table both masked and was

FIVE REOPENED NEW ORLEANS RESTAURANTS

August, 301 Tchoupitoulas Street, 504-299-9777, www.rest-august.com. John Besh's refined nouvelle French cuisine, with the post-storm addition of a few New Orleans classics, in an elegant building.

Clancy's, 6100 Annunciation Street, 504-895-1111. Brad Hollingsworth's uptown semi-club, serving undemanding and good Creole food.

Herbsaint, 701 St. Charles Avenue, 504-524-4114, www.herbsaint.com. Donald Link's French American bistro, noted for its gumbo and its banana tart.

Lilette, 3637 Magazine Street, 504-895-1636, www.lilletterestaurant.com. John Harris's polished gem of an uptown French bistro.

Upperline, 1413 Upperline Street, 504-891-9822, www.upperline.com. JoAnn Clevenger's cheering uptown restaurant, using local ingredients prepared simply, traditionally, and beautifully.

fueled by their having no idea how long they could afford to live in the place they loved most.

This was how it went over several days of dining in New Orleans restaurants that had reopened as soon as they could: immaculate food prepared and consumed with joy, need, and uncertainty. At August, a tony restaurant with what may be the most ambitious and original food in the city, Tywon Morgan, a host, practically danced up and down the stairs between the kitchen and the banquet room. He explained when he stopped by our table. "Our first private party!" he said. "Sixty people! Business is coming back!"

He was reflecting the anxious optimism I had heard expressed by restaurant owners in recent days. They were hoping for customers in three waves of increasing magnitude: families and

business people who would return for the opening of schools in January—the first test of how many residents would actually come back; revelers for Mardi Gras, which, everyone hoped, would kick-start the crucial tourist trade; and conventioners, the biggest question mark of all, who would trickle back as early as spring.

John Besh, the chef and co-owner of August, cooked as if he were unconcerned. True, the city's wine supply had been badly depleted. "Definitely a post-K list," said Brett Anderson, the restaurant critic of *The Times-Picayune* and my friend and guide, as he opened August's leather-bound wine menu. Lolis Eric Elie, a columnist for the paper and, like Anderson, a passionate, witty chronicler of city life since the storm, reminded him of the many wine cellars that had been lost completely, notably the 5,000 bottles at Susan Spicer's Bayona.

But the food was even better than what I had tasted in July. A plate of chilled seafood was startlingly fresh, with little crescents of Louisiana shrimp and beautifully sweet crabmeat in ravigote sauce, the Tabasco-spiked mayonnaise that is a New Orleans hallmark. Besh, who cooked at the elegant Windsor Court Hotel, across the street, made his name with nouvelle cuisine-influenced dishes based on solid French technique and using many local ingredients. I had, for instance, pumpkin soup drizzled with pumpkin-seed oil and garnished with crab flakes, and pheasant breaded with panko crumbs, sautéed and in a sweetish sauce reminiscent of Chinese food. But since the storm Besh had begun to include the dishes of his bayou youth and the city's heritage, such as that ravigote sauce and gumbo at Friday lunch, the Sunday supper of New Orleans.

Besh clearly saw a void that needed filling. He had made August an elegant and innovative alternative to Antoine's and Galatoire's, but neither of them had yet been able to reopen. Antoine's, the 800-seat landmark that claims to have invented crabmeat ravigote, lost

its maître d', Clifton Lachney, who drowned with his son; the restaurant also suffered damage to a brick wall that would take months to repair. Galatoire's, which claims to be the home of shrimp remoulade, went ahead with long-contemplated plans to open a branch in Baton Rouge, promising to reopen its Bourbon Street flagship early in the new year.

This was outright treason in a city that had already suffered unexpected indignities: Emeril Lagasse, New Orleans's best-known chef, kept a low profile after the storm; the corporate owners of Ruth's Chris Steak House immediately pulled up stakes and moved their headquarters to Orlando, claiming that Ruth Fertel, the tireless and much-loved founder of the chain, would have pragmatically done the same. "It just isn't so," her son, Randy Fertel, said solemnly and angrily at an October conference of the Southern Foodways Alliance, in Oxford, Mississippi. The news from Galatoire's was particularly galling. "First the storm, then the floods," Anderson wrote when announcing the Baton Rouge defection. "Now hell is apparently freezing over."

Loyalty and the tug of home were what made most restaurants reopen, as families—both biological and collegial—reunited. In mid-September, JoAnn Clevenger, proprietor of the Garden District restaurant Upperline and a defender and champion of her city and its food, called her husband back from England, where he works half the year, and her son from St. Louis, where he teaches philosophy, to help with the cooking and to serve customers. Alex Patout, a well-known local chef, cooked on the line to help out. Tacked to the front of the airy, bright, tearoom-like restaurant were three shirt cardboards inscribed with "We're glad you're here!" The menu was simplified, but offered the kind of food I most want to eat, each dish speaking of local ingredients and local cuisine: fried green tomatoes with shrimp remoulade; duck and

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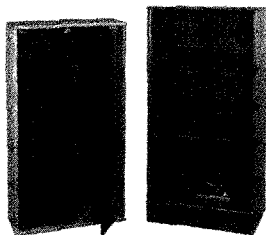
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The trinity of Sazerac ingredients survived Hurricane Katrina: Herbsaint liqueur, Peychaud's Bitters, and Sazerac 18 Year Old Rye Whiskey. All are owned by the Sazerac Company, headquartered in New Orleans in a building that itself survived the storm. The bitters and the whiskey are made in limited quantities in Frankfort, Kentucky, by the Buffalo Trace Distillery; for more information, see www.buffalotrace.com.

The Sazerac Bar, at the Fairmont Hotel, which uses the name by permission, is still under restoration, but the bar that famously makes the Sazerac a speciality is back in business. The Rib Room, at the Omni Royal Orleans, was long the domain of Martin Sawyer, the genial and expert eighty-four-year-old bartender, who explained his decades of bartending and his own Sazerac technique in *Marsaw* (2005), a short, jazzy film made by the gifted young filmmaker Joe York. (The transcript of a long, delightful interview with Sawyer is available at www.southernfoodways.com.) Sawyer took refuge after the storm with his family and will no longer be behind the bar full-time, but the Rib Room still proudly uses his ecumenical Sazerac recipe: brandy, rye, Herbsaint, Peychaud's Bitters, Angostura bitters, and sugar syrup—always stirred, not shaken.

—CORBY KUMMER



andouille gumbo; Cane River country shrimp with mushroom, bacon, and garlic served over crispy grits.

At the Southern Foodways Alliance conference, Clevenger had described the impossibility of finding people to work because housing was so rare, and recounted how neighborhood spirit helped people get up and running; she cheered on neighbors like Clancy's, an uptown hangout and the place Anderson went for his last meal before evacuating the city. Clancy's became one of the first restaurants to reopen, on October 17. Although it is owned by a native Iowan, Brad Hollingsworth, it has become practically a club for the multigeneration Garden District families who rely on its unfussy Creole food.

When I stopped by Clancy's, it was just past eleven, almost three hours before the city's curfew, but dinner service had ended, and the cooks and managers were having a nightcap at the bar. The place felt like a jazz club after hours, when the players swap stories and wind down. Everyone smoked. Nash Laurent, the maître d', put Armand Jonté, the guest chef, in a headlock to wish him good night. Jonté, whose Mississippi gulf house was swept to pilings, was working in the kitchen with Steve Manning, an old friend of his. The group talked fondly of the school-less high school teacher and the wine salesman who had both come in to wash dishes after the reopening. After a few laughs about regulars like the "vodka ladies," Michael Laurent, who had come back to help his father, brought the conversation around to where every conversation ended up or started. "Okay, who's living at their own house?" he asked. He and his family were living at his in-laws'. Only three hands went up.

Informal and formal networks are working to bring back the small eating places most at risk—the po' boy shops and gumbo dives that have always given the city its character. (I saw markedly more white

faces in December than on any of my previous visits to the city over two decades.) The Southern Foodways Alliance in November announced a series of "volunteer vacation" weekends to help rebuild Willie Mae's Scotch House, a modest but legendary restaurant serving what many consider the city's finest fried chicken, made by the eighty-nine-year-old Willie Mae Seaton. "No experience is necessary!" the alliance promised, throwing in the incentive of dinners with Elie, the *Times-Picayune* columnist, and the writer Pableaux Johnson (whose recent *Eating New Orleans*, published last summer, is now as much testament as guide).

The Brennans, the first family of New Orleans restaurateurs, began trying to find jobs and housing for displaced workers immediately after the storm, operating a job Web site (at www.cirajobs.com) out of a family member's restaurant, Brennan's of Houston. Dickie Brennan, owner of three French Quarter restaurants, kept 400 workers on his payroll for five weeks after the storm, while two employees worked full-time on the phone to find out where people had landed and whether they would come back, giving out all available information on how to file FEMA and insurance claims.

When I visited Bourbon House, the first of Dickie Brennan's three businesses to reopen, the ornate two-level restaurant was bright and crowded, like something out of the Diamond Jim Brady era; most of the customers were reconstruction workers and locals who had come back, but I did notice a very few obvious tourists. Bourbon House was the first in the French Quarter to serve fresh Louisiana oysters again, and an owner of a well-established seafood distributor stood behind the shucking bar for four nights to reassure diners about safety. "People weren't concerned," Steve Pettus, a managing partner, told me with surprise. "They were like, 'Gimme oysters.'" Pettus spoke

SAZERAC COMPANY INC.

of how good the fish was: "The guy who catches catfish for us called up right away and said, 'I'm here, I'm still fishing.'" Several chefs told me that the very lack of restaurants competing for the best ingredients helped them find even better fish and seafood than usual. Local produce would be another matter; Brennan had already held a benefit for farmers around Baton Rouge who had long supplied local restaurants. Attracting diners was no problem, he said. "You go outside the restaurant and it's gloom and doom, it's hard work, it's a bad day I'm having. You get inside and people see each other, hug each other. Eating out is therapeutic."

On my last morning I began, as I had each previous day, with biscuits from Mother's, a home-style Creole cafeteria near Canal and Tchoupitoulas, and chicory-laced coffee from Café Du Monde, a ten-minute walk away on Decatur Street, along

the waterfront. I noticed a landmark that hadn't been open before: Central Grocery, an Italian-American emporium with imported pasta, cheeses, and the city's premier muffulettas—cold-cut-stuffed hero sandwiches on fat baguettes soaked with Central's famous olive salad. The bread, the salad, and the sandwiches had been back for only three hours, I was told by Larry Tusa, one of the three owners. He and his family had been determined to reopen, he said, in time to celebrate the store's hundredth anniversary, on February 28.

Tusa used to live in the Lakeview neighborhood, very near the 17th Street Canal break. His house was ruined. A neighbor and friend since grade school had seen his wife drown; Tusa had counseled another friend against suicide. He would never go back to Lakeview, he said. Neither would his father, Charles, in his eighties, who plans to move to a condo on higher ground. "He worked all his life for this

and this city," Tusa said, gesturing at the long, old-fashioned deli counter and the workers behind it—four of the original ten. "If I didn't have this business, I'd be in Houston with my daughter." But stay he would. "New Orleans is one of the gateways to the United States, and I don't think they should forget us. Don't give anybody false hopes. Commit to whatever it takes to rebuild."

On my way back to the hotel to pack, I stopped, distracted, at Aunt Sally's Praline Shop, one of the few souvenir shops to have reopened on the very touristy riverfront strip. The manager was on the phone; she covered the mouthpiece to call out to me, "Sir, is Central Grocery open?" I'd bought a jar of olive salad, and was carrying a bag showing the store's big green logo. Yes, I said, as of three hours ago. "Central's open!" she said excitedly into the phone. "You'll have lunch today." ▀

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of The Atlantic.

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TECHNOLOGY

Spy's-Eye View

Google Earth and its rival programs offer (civilians) a new way to look at the world

BY JAMES FALLOWS

As best I can figure, I have spent 35,000 to 40,000 hours of my life sitting at a computer. This knowledge does not improve my mood or self-esteem. But it brings into sharp relief the handful of moments at the keyboard I can distinctly remember, each involving a time when I realized that the computer had just done something important and new.

In the late 1970s, I marveled at the discovery that I could use my very first computer (a Processor Technology SOL-20) to save something I had drafted, then change it later on without having to retype the whole thing. In the early 1980s, I watched a message I had written go to its destination electronically, through a 300-baud modem I clamped onto a telephone handset.

In 1993, I tried a program called Mosaic, one of the very first browsers, and was amazed to see pictures and documents stored on someone else's

computer show up on my own screen. In 1995, I entered a few words into a search box and within seconds got back some more-or-less relevant information, via the early search engine AltaVista.

That was it for truly memorable moments, until last year when I first tried Google Earth.

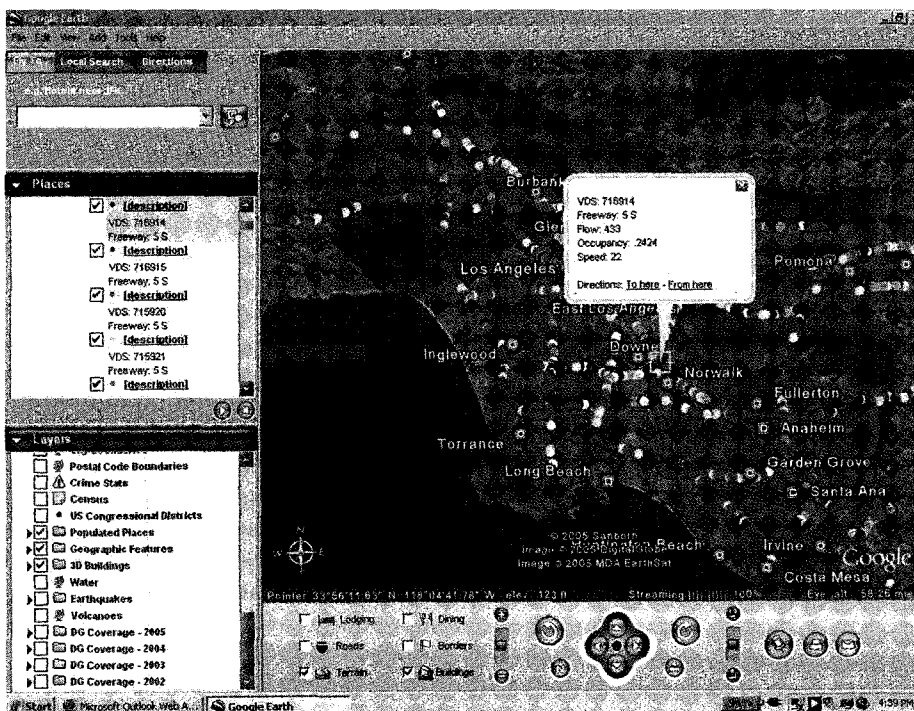
The addictive nature of this program stems from three elements. One is a set of satellite and aerial photos of the globe's entire surface, which Google has acquired from a variety of public and private sources. These vary greatly in resolution, but the sharp ones, which already cover most major populated areas and are steadily expanding in range, are unnervingly clear. I now take it for granted that I can pick out every building—homes, schools, offices—I care about in the United States. But I can also see the tiny house where my family lived outside Tokyo, complete with ten-foot-square “back yard,” and the red-roofed colonial bungalow we rented in Kuala Lumpur, which now sits in the shadow of the Petronas Towers, two of the world's tallest buildings. The village where my wife and I once worked in Ghana, on the other hand, is just a green blur.

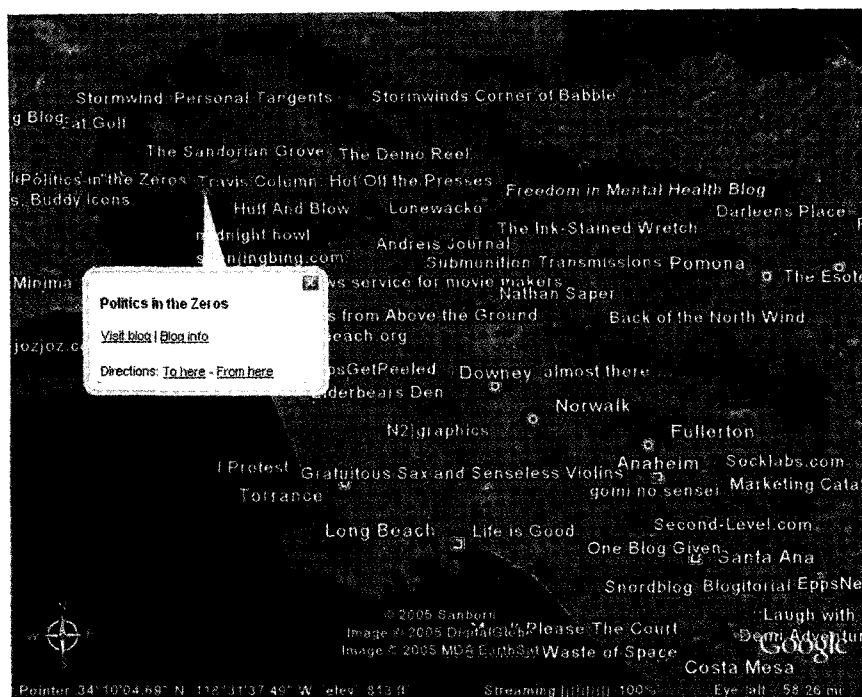
The next element is Google Earth's viewing system, which lets you “fly” from point to point. This sounds trivial, but I think it can profoundly reorient people's sense of geography. We are used to thinking of places as being arrayed along roads or rail lines, or linked by airline routes. Taking a Google Earth “flight” is like driving through a city you knew only through subways, and seeing the surprising ways the pieces fit together.

Finally, the program has an imperfect but tantalizing 3D feature. The contours of terrain and, in certain cities, the heights of downtown structures are built into the database. Although the program's standard view is straight down from overhead, you can tilt the perspective, until you're looking from a low altitude or even ground level. This gives a dramatic sense of how, say, a ski resort fits into the surrounding mountains, or how the fjords of Greenland would look if you approached from the sea. You can't count on the program to have enough accurate data to make this feature work everywhere—those Petronas Towers, when seen at a tilt, look no taller than my former house—but where it works it's great.

The basic version of the program, which does everything described in this article, is free (it requires a broadband connection). For now, it runs only on PCs, but its creator, John Hanke, says that a Mac version is about to appear. Hanke and others developed the program at a small company called Keyhole, which Google bought two years ago. (Microsoft has released its counterpart program, Virtual Earth, at its Windows Live site, <http://local.live.com>. This program doesn't have the flying or 3D features of Google Earth, but it does have superior close-up shots of many U.S. cities, including “bird's-eye” views of about a dozen cities so breathtakingly detailed

The Caltrans overlay for Google Earth shows current traffic conditions





Blogwise.com tells who is writing a blog in your neighborhood

that in some cases you can see the individual panes in the windows. You can also see some structures that have been blurred out of Google Earth—for instance, the vice president’s home in Washington.)

Together these elements make Google Earth fascinating. What makes the program important is the trait it shares with other big steps forward in computing, like the previous ones I recall so sharply. It is not an end in itself but a beginning of new opportunities for innovation by others, based on the new tools it provides.

A huge theme in recent discussions of the Internet's future is the growing importance of "user-created content." In the old-media days of the twentieth century, small groups of specialists produced books, newspapers, or broadcasts that larger public audiences could consume. Now millions of people publish their views over the Internet, by producing blogs, or rating products or services online, or posting pictures and Webcasts for others to view, or creating networks of like-minded people who can share recommendations about vacation sites or bikes or restaurants.

The tools that have thus democratized publishing—or that have enabled user-created content, if you prefer—are many and varied. But they rest upon the fundamental units of all modern Internet activity: URLs, links, and words. A URL (uniform resource locator) directs a browser to a particular set of files on a particular computer somewhere on Earth (each Web “page” is really a collection of files). Links take users from one set of files to another. The words in a file, indexed by search engines or catalogued as “tags,” serve as a guide to Web page content.

Google Earth of course employs links and URLs. Its basic unit of classification, however, is not a word but a set of global positioning system (GPS) coordinates, pinpointing a location on the Earth with uncanny precision. The Google Earth view of my neighborhood in Washington shows a red truck parked down the street. The front bumper of that truck has a different GPS address from the windshield. And in the same way that a “traditional” blog, if we can use that term, might have links pointing to a particular news item or posting, Google Earth

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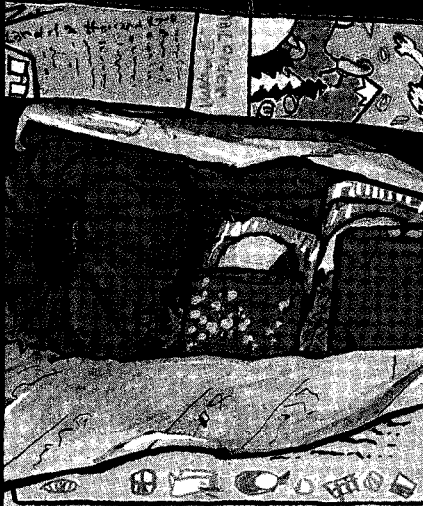
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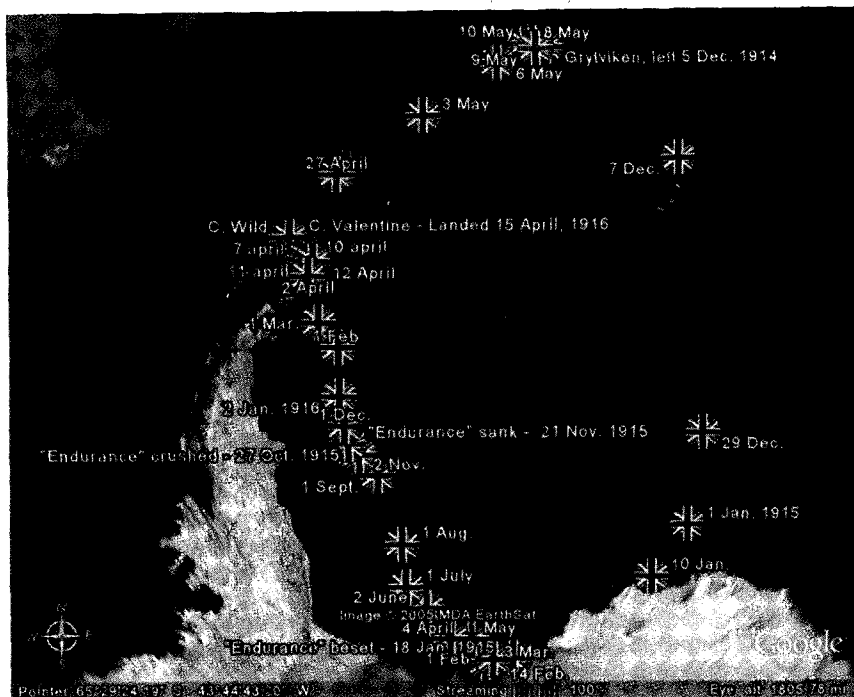


allows the equivalent of bloggers to attach annotations to specific geographical points. These overlays consist of pictures, written descriptions, Internet links, or other data tied to the GPS coordinates of a particular place. When a Google Earth user zooms in on that place, the link to the information appears, usually as a clickable icon or button.

Since last June, when Google released the program and its toolkit for creating these overlays, many people have gotten to work. As with online book reviews at Amazon.com or entries on Wikipedia (the online encyclopedia in which anyone can write or edit an entry), the information supplied can range from authoritative to bogus. But nearly all of it is interesting.

The easiest way to see what's on offer is through sites like Ogleearth.com and Gearthblog.com. They have news and screenshots, and links to files that create the overlays for Google Earth. You click to download overlays to your computer. Then, when Google Earth is running, you choose the overlays you want displayed. John Hanke of Google showed me a few examples, which ranged from the fanciful to the highly practical.

On the practical side is an overlay from Caltrans, the agency responsible for California's freeways. When you display this data within Google Earth, it shows congestion conditions every mile or so along freeways in the state's major cities. Clusters of red, orange, yellow, or green dots show you where traffic is moving and where it is jammed; any dot you click on tells the average speed of cars passing that point. A WiFi overlay shows the nearest available commercial hot spots. On a skiing overlay, you can click a blue snowflake symbol by major resorts and get detailed slope information and a link to the mountain's Web site. An aviation site called FBOWeb.com offers a free demonstration showing the trajectories airliners are taking toward several major airports; by using the tilted view you can "watch"



South 3.1 chronicles Ernest Shackleton's doomed *Endurance* mission

planes as they descend over Boston Harbor or through the Los Angeles basin for landing. You can display as many of these varied overlays as you choose, clicking on a check box to turn them on or off.

Less practical, but often more delightful, creations continue to proliferate. An overlay from Blogwise.com shows who is writing a blog in your city—or in Buenos Aires or Beijing—with a link to each blog. Another shows bird migration patterns. One called South 3.1 shows the route of Ernest Shackleton's doomed *Endurance* mission to Antarctica, with photos and log entries matched to their locations. Another, covering the Mount Everest area, maps the course of a 2003 Everest expedition with aerial photos so sharp you can see individual tents. The Google Earth Community overlay has Wikipedia-style notes on interesting buildings and historic sites.

Perhaps the most open-ended potential involves Google Earth's interaction with Flickr, the photo-sharing site run by Yahoo. More than 75 million photos have been stored at Flickr, many of them tagged by location—

"Paris, Arc de Triomphe"—or "geotagged" with GPS coordinates. People pay to post these pictures, as a handy way to store files that can clog hard drives and to keep them all in one place; viewing access is generally free. Using the Flickr overlay, which works through a site called Geobloggers, you can see any available photos of the place you're looking at. For instance, when displayed in addition to the Everest overlay, Flickr brings up pictures people have taken at the summit. When I'm looking at my neighborhood, I see Flickr photos of trees that were blown down two years ago in a hurricane. New shots pour into Flickr each day, and to similar sites like Panoramio.com, founded by two young Spaniards, which lets users easily link their photos to specific sites.

Google Earth is far less powerful than "geographic information systems," or GIS. These are complex and often expensive programs that match economic, demographic, environmental, and other data to satellite views of particular locations. A county government might use GIS to combine data on population density, fire risks, and traffic patterns to find the right

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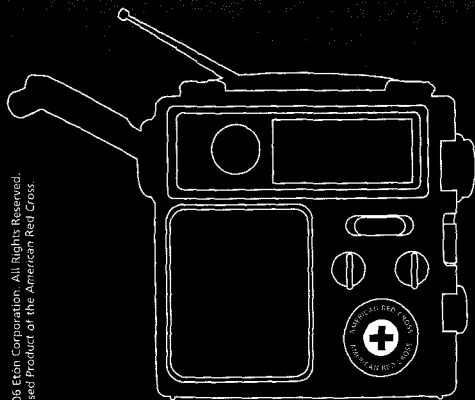
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But according to Jack Dangermond, founder and president of the world's leading GIS company, ESRI of Redlands, California, the free services available under Google Earth will increase the public's use of geographically linked information, for-pay and free alike. "There's no way to connect a professional data set to Google Earth, so in a sense it is pretty thin," he said. "But because it is spellbinding to customers, it can only build awareness of geography. And if this exposure makes citizens more spatially literate, they can accept more of their information this way and visualize more about their local situations." Many governments already use GIS to let citizens see public data, from the residences of registered sex offenders to the tax assessments of buildings, homes, and lots. Within a year or two, he said, standard Web browsers will allow citizens to "fly" through this data or see it in 3D, using features like Google Earth's.

"Honestly, I have no idea where this is going in the long run," John Hanke of Google told me. "Ten years ago, this technology was the exclusive province of the U.S. intelligence community. Five years ago, it cost \$14,000 for a single satellite image. Now there's free, global high-resolution imagery." The most significant use of the technology so far, he said, has been to provide "maps for places where they had no previous maps." He read from a newspaper story about the headman of a Kurdish village who was using a Google Earth printout to plan the village's rebuilding. "This is really inspiring to me," Hanke said. "It's the sort of thing that we thought might happen as this information is released and democratized."

Fooling around with this program and its overlays has put a few more hours on my computer total. These hours seem better spent than most. ▮

James Fallows is a national correspondent for The Atlantic.



TRAVELS

Going Coastal

Away from the heat and bustle of Morocco's historic cities lie some of the friendliest and most tranquil places in North Africa

BY JEFFREY TAYLER

Morocco's main attractions can weary travelers as much as enchant them. The imperial cities of Fez, Marrakesh, and Meknes boast tiled tombs and ornate mosques set among medinas, or old quarters of cities, of medieval squalor as well as medieval allure. The moonscape crags of the Atlas Mountains demand of climbers powerful lungs and legs of steel. The oases of the deep south, with their towering casbahs, groves of palms, and fields of feathery alfalfa, stand amid Saharan wastes where the temperature can reach 120 degrees. Most wearying of all are the aggressive teenage *faux guides*, who, touting their

services, can turn a stroll down a spice-scented lane into an excursion as tranquil as a stint of trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. While living as a Peace Corps volunteer in the medina of Marrakesh, I thought I would lose my mind or have to quit the country, intrigued though I was by it, until I discovered the towns along Morocco's Atlantic coast.

These towns offer soothing breezes, temperate weather all year long, and, most important, tranquillity. They remain relaxed and welcoming to outsiders, perhaps because they aren't overrun by visitors and depend more on

fishing than on tourism for their income. In other ways, too, they little resemble Morocco's inland cities. Although most of the country became a French protectorate in 1912, in the preceding centuries some parts of the coast fell to the Portuguese, others to the Spanish, and this has left the region with a uniquely varied architectural and cultural legacy. Some sixty miles south of Casablanca is Azemmour, whose Portuguese-built ramparts shelter what was a sizable Jewish community until the 1960s, when the Arab-Israeli wars sparked large-scale Jewish emigration from Arab countries. Down the coast is Essaouira, whose medina has of late become something of a cross between an artists' colony and a resort for *le tout Paris*—a development that, surprisingly, has enhanced the city's ambience. Still farther south, at the edge of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, is Sidi Ifni, probably the friendliest and most peaceful inhabited place in all Morocco.

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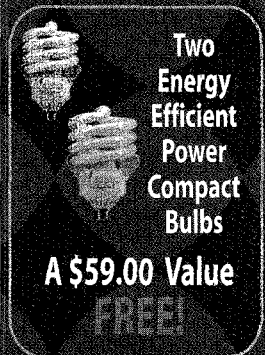
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These towns can serve as refuges for travelers seeking a quiet interlude after the clamor of Marrakesh or Fez, and Essaouira in particular is worth a trip in its own right. Getting to them is no problem: they are connected by roads, other roads tie them to the interior, and international airports in Casablanca and Agadir make readily accessible the northern and southern parts of the coast. To travel between towns you may hire *grands taxis* (usually serviceable old Mercedes) at the rate of around three dirhams (thirty cents) a mile, or take (much less comfortable) buses. About \$75 a day per person should be enough for meals, transportation, and accommodations in the better hotels. For information on getting around, maps, and historical aperçus I recommend *The Rough Guide to Morocco* and Cadogan's *Morocco*.

At an indentation in the coast, near where a river called Oum er Rbia ("Mother of Spring") pours its dark-green water into a pale-green surf, rise the ginger-tinted ramparts and cream-colored houses of Azemmour. The Portuguese occupation of the town lasted only a few decades in the sixteenth century—barely enough time to build a fortress. During my most recent trip I was struck by how little had seemingly happened since then. Just inside the fortress's main portal a young man in a blue djellaba pushed a lopsided, creaking cart marked, in wavering handwritten Arabic, *Muthallajat al-Nahdha* ("Renaissance Ice Creams"); tiny boys in skullcaps clustered around him, buying his wares. Farther on a bearded elder in pointy-toed yellow slippers guided a cart loaded with vegetables. From second-story windows housewives lowered buckets, into which he placed carrots, cauliflower, and onions. Veiled women strolled by with small sacks of semolina balanced on their heads or circular tablets of aromatic bread in their hands. Not only bread scented the sea air: fragrant purple-blossomed flowers were in bloom, their petals and leaves providing shelter for finches and warblers.

I wanted to visit the tomb of Rabbi Abraham Moul Niss, where a town *moussem*, or festival, is held each August. I had never seen a Jewish monument of this sort in Morocco, although the country had a rich Jewish history before the Arabs brought Islam, in the seventh century. When I asked directions at a shop on the main square, the owner told his eight-year-old nephew, Abdelwahid, to show me the way.

We left the square and followed narrow lanes that rose and fell, but mostly fell, through the medina and led into the once-vibrant *mellah*, or Jewish quarter. The *mellah* looked abandoned, with boarded-up windows and crumbling arches. By the western rampart, facing the Atlantic, we found the rabbi's tomb, a whitewashed stone structure with Hebrew lettering above its locked steel doors, but the custodian was away and admittance was impossible. "The Jews come back for the *moussem*," the boy said, "but you're too early."

We retraced our steps to his uncle's shop, and from there Abdelwahid led me up a flight of stairs to show me a place on the ancient ramparts from which I could see the ocean. On the shore, a half mile or so distant, a wooden boat lay wrecked in the sand. The sight called to mind notions of tragedy and abandonment, but then I heard the excited voices of more little boys: the ice-cream vendor had pushed his cart beneath our spot on the wall.

From Azemmour the main road runs 180 miles south across the plain of Doukkala—the breadbasket of Morocco, where horses pull carts through burgeoning fields of wheat—to Essaouira. The beach at Essaouira is long, wide, and flat, a favorite with windsurfers because of the strong wind off the Atlantic. The hauntingly serene blue-and-white medina, enclosed in Portuguese ramparts, is home to the French-owned Taros, Morocco's first literary café. But I had other things on my mind when I arrived, foremost among them charcoal-grilled fish, served at outdoor restaurants that

overlook the surf. The fish had all been caught that day, sometimes that hour, aboard trawlers that by evening were moored just down the quay. Each dish came with a warm baguette and a crescent of fresh lemon.

After a hearty meal my thoughts turned to the Isle of Mogador. I had always wanted to visit this island, whose ruined fortress and prison rise above a boulder-strewn shore just across from Essaouira proper. A nature reserve, it is populated by rabbits, gulls, and, at times, Eleonora's falcons, but no human beings except a caretaker. *The Rough Guide* told me that I would have to apply to the municipality for permission to land on the island, but this amounted to nothing more than asking the Royal Gendarmerie at the port if I could go.

At the quay I found a fisherman named Mohammed and bargained with him for a ride to the island. We boarded what he called his felucca—an outboard-powered scow that bore no resemblance to the slender vessels of the Nile—and pulled out of Essaouira's small harbor, crossing bands of sea now deep blue, now luminous green.

Up close the island turned out to be covered in thorny scrub and seagulls' nests. After disembarking on a tiny concrete pier, Mohammed and I hiked up into the birds' domain. Gulls squawked at us from their nests in the brush, where they were incubating mottled green-brown eggs; they circled above us and dove down at our heads, often approaching from behind and screaming a few feet from us before veering away.

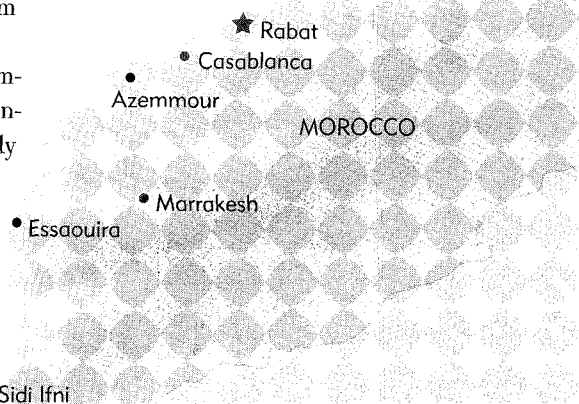
The gulls left us at the prison, a simple structure built in the nineteenth century by Sultan Moulay El Hassan. Only lichen-splotched gray stone walls now remained. Upon first entering, we could see where the offices and staff quarters had been. Farther into the ruins was a huge courtyard. This was where political prisoners were kept, Mohammed said—exposed to the elements, often chained

to the walls. Beyond the walls stood a dilapidated minaret.

Near the shore again, we happened upon a stone hut where fishermen were mending nets. One of them told me that he wanted to show me something. I followed him back into the gulls' domain to a clearing, where the earth was bone-colored and gravelly. He reached down and wrestled what looked like a pale stone the size of a grapefruit out of the earth. It was a human skull. Around us, I noticed with a shiver, lay femurs and tibiae, finger bones and ribs. The site was a graveyard, and the wind had blown away the earth to expose the dead.

"This was once a man, like us," the fisherman said. He held the skull to the sun and peered into its empty eye sockets. "God grant him mercy." He replaced the skull in the friable earth and covered it with sand.

For months at a time mists shroud Sidi Ifni, where little disrupts the quiet except the occasional chug of fishing boats. That Morocco and Spain fought a war in the 1950s over this sugary-white, now somnolent town is hard to imagine but true. Sidi Ifni belonged to Spain until 1969, when besieging Moroccan troops forced Madrid to return it. The Spanish left behind an Art Deco town center, including a church and quarters for their administrators that now house offices of the Moroccan government.



WHERE TO STAY AND WHAT TO EAT

AZEMMOUR

Azemmour is an easy trip from Casablanca, about two hours away. Accommodations in the town itself are limited; try the basic **Hôtel de la Poste**, with its traditional Moroccan restaurant. More lodging and dining options can be found in nearby El Jadida (*grands taxis* make the drive in about twenty minutes). The **Sofitel Royal Golf El Jadida** offers upscale, oceanfront rooms and an eighteen-hole golf course.

Hôtel de la Poste

100 Boulevard Mohammed V
Azemmour
212 23 35 77 02

Sofitel Royal Golf El Jadida

Route de Casablanca km7
Boîte Postale 116
El Jadida
212 23 37 91 00
www.sofitel.com

During the day, stop by the **Café El Manzeh** on the Boulevard Mohammed V, one of many small cafés in the town centers of Azemmour and Sidi Ifni. Enjoy dinner at the **Restaurant le Tit** or the **Restaurant Ali Baba**, both in El Jadida.

Restaurant le Tit

2 Avenue Al Jamia Al Arabia
(Avenue Mohammed VI)
El Jadida
212 23 34 39 08

Restaurant Ali Baba

Avenue Al Jamia Al Arabia
(Avenue Mohammed VI)
(on the coastal route to Casablanca)
El Jadida
212 23 34 16 22

ESSAOUIRA

For accommodations that offer both elegance and coziness, stay at the **Villa Maroc**, a series of traditional houses built around interior gardens known as *riads*. Book well in advance, though: the hotel is very well known and has only twenty rooms.

Villa Maroc

10 Rue Abdallah Ben Yassine
Essaouira
212 44 47 61 47
www.villa-maroc.com

If you are planning to stay in Essaouira for more than a couple of days, consider renting through **Jack's Kiosk**. You'll find beautiful apartments featuring Moroccan décor and including a living room, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom.

Jack's Kiosk

1 Place Moulay El Hassan
Essaouira
212 44 47 55 38
www.essaouira.com/apartments

Café Taros is a wonderful spot to spend an evening, particularly if you speak French. The café's French owner often circulates and chats with guests as they dine.

Café Taros

2 Rue de la Scala
Place Moulay El Hassan
Essaouira
212 44 47 64 07

Finally, Essaouira's **open-air grills** by the port are the highlight of any visit to the town. Enjoy shrimp, squid, crabs, mussels, mackerel, and monkfish fresh out of the water.

SIDI IFNI

The **Hôtel Suerte Loca**, a distinctive building with a blue-and-white facade, is a charming and friendly place to stay. The family that runs the hotel speaks English and can provide advice about where to go and what to do.

Hôtel Suerte Loca

7 Rue Moulay Youssef
Sidi Ifni
212 48 87 53 50

Hôtel Belle Vue, right on the town's main place, is another comfortable option.

Hôtel Belle Vue

9 Place Hassan II
Sidi Ifni
212 48 87 50 72

For lunch try one of the cafés in the town center; in the evening dine at the popular restaurants in either of the above hotels.

Nearby, from the dozens of cafés along Avenues Hassan II and Mohammed V, ceaseless but friendly chatter emanates, and cars are few.

I followed the promenade from Place Hassan II in the town center down to the tomb of the marabout, or Sufi saint, who is said to have given Sidi Ifni its name. For centuries marabouts claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad have attracted large followings in Morocco with their teachings and their ability to bestow *baraka*, blessings that supposedly have the power to heal. (There were no *baraka* on offer that day—I had missed Sidi Ifni's *moussem* too.) A brass crescent moon tops the tomb's white dome; pink-and-green columns support the roof over its courtyard; and blue-green tiles cover the lower half of its walls. All this seemed starkly geometric against the granite slopes of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, but roses growing in parterres in front of the tomb softened the impression.

Later that day I decided I needed a haircut. *The Rough Guide* recommended a barber named Hassan Anzag—but not for his talent with scissors. The book said he collected pictures of colonial-era Sidi Ifni. As Hassan's scissors flicked above my ears, I thumbed through black-and-white snapshots of old Sidi Ifni, which, I was not surprised to see, looked a lot like new Sidi Ifni. One photo in particular caught my eye: it was of a young Elizabeth Taylor.

Hassan grew excited. "That's Liz," he said, "during the shooting of a movie. I've been trying to get her address, you know. I'd like to let her know I have this photo." His scissors paused. "You wouldn't happen to have her address, would you?"

In this timeless town it seemed almost plausible that I might. In the end, though, Hassan settled for exchanging addresses with me. 🐾

Jeffrey Taylor is a correspondent for The Atlantic and the author of four books, including Angry Wind: Through Muslim Black Africa by Bus, Truck, Boat, and Camel.



WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

In October a reader in Kingston, Washington, requested a word for “the reflection of moonlight on water and the way it follows you as you are walking down the beach or a dock.” Her congressman, Jay Inslee, promptly sent in four original coinages, including the more-than-serviceable term *emoontional attachment*. How’s that for responsive representation?

Other readers, including Jesse Sheidlower, an editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, reported that the word requested already exists: *moonglade*. Sheidlower wrote, “It’s very rare, and it tends to appear mostly in lists of words for things you didn’t know there were words for. But it is used for real.” Dan Schechter, of Los Alamitos, California, argued for a different word that he already knew. He wrote, “Mariners sometimes call the moving path of light leading to the moon the *moonwake*, because it looks like the white wash of a ship’s wake.”

Duly noted. But let’s check out some shiny new coinages too.

Andreas Connal-Nicolaou, of Preston, Connecticut, wrote, “Being a paranoid person, I have always looked over my shoulder and wondered why moonlight would follow me as I walk along the beach at night.” Thus he (among other readers) proposed *luna-sea*.

Hugh McClintock, of Conneautville, Pennsylvania, made up two words—and a Native American language. He wrote, “*Mondstrahlbleichfolgenimmerwandererufer* leaps to mind as a wonderfully apt, self-defining German neologism for friendly waterborne moon rays. True, it’s a tad long, but the charm of Teutonic eloquence easily makes up for the length.

“And the Senecas have a flashy word meaning ‘moon ray on water that tracks brave,’ but it’s in an untranslatable sign language. Alas, if only I could pass it along.”

Moonglade or *moonwake* is surely the word to use for real. But in recognition of his droll sense of humor, let’s award McClintock top honors anyway.

In October another reader wanted a term “to describe the burned bit of skin



on the roof of your mouth” that you get when you bite into a too-hot pizza. Once again experts weighed in. Barbara Ravage, of Orleans, Massachusetts, wrote, “In my book *Burn Unit: Saving Lives After the Flames*, I call this burn a *pizza peel* (pun intended).” Halley S. Faust, M.D., of West Hartford, Connecticut, wrote, “Mark Dembert, M.D., and I published a letter to the editor of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* in 1984 that described *pizza palate*.” Other readers submitted *pizza palate* as well, some of whom said they’d been using the term for years. Whether they learned it from their dentists, and the dentists learned it from Faust and Dembert, will never be known.

Kate Dreher, of Davis, California, extrapolated from pizza to other too-hot foods. She wrote, “The chances are much higher than one in six that I’ll end up with a *rushing ruelette* on the roof of my mouth when I can’t overcome the urge to sample a freshly baked batch of cookies!” Gary Eschman, of Santa Fe, came up with another word that would work for the result of biting into anything too hot: *palatite*, derived from *palate* and *stalactite*.

Bill Kapp, of Houston, reported, “I’ve always called this a *pizza hang-over*.” Top honors, however, go to Charles Harrington Elster, of San Diego, for his coinage *pizzaster*.

Now STEVE MIDGLEY, of San Rafael, California, writes, “I am looking for a word to describe a kind of typographical error: hitting a function key by mistake while typing on a computer. All the typing after that point causes the computer to start taking insane actions that I don’t want.”

And TOM GAMMARINO, of Forest Hills, New York, writes, “I keep finding myself looking for a word that means nostalgia for a time when I wasn’t alive—a kind of wistful projection.”

Send words that meet Steve Midgley’s or Tom Gammarino’s needs to *Word Fugitives*, The Atlantic Monthly, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or visit the *Word Fugitives* page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by March 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you’d like The Atlantic’s help in finding. Letters become the property of *Word Fugitives* and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment’s correspondents will be sent 1491, by Charles C. Mann; *Mission to America: A Novel*, by Walter Kirn; and my own *Word Fugitives*.

GREG CLARKE

Mister Available

Eugene McCarthy (1916–2005)

BY MARK STEYN

If you strike at the king, you have to kill him. And, amazingly, Eugene McCarthy did. On March 12, 1968, the not exactly barnstorming senator got 42.4 percent of Democratic votes in the New Hampshire primary and denied the sitting president even a majority of his own party's supporters: Lyndon Johnson secured just 49.5 percent. Within three weeks, he was gone: the president announced he would not seek re-election and effectively ended his political career. The king was dead, long live ... well, not Senator McCarthy: the man who plunged the dagger in did not take the crown. But his few short weeks of stumping the Granite State changed his party, with consequences it lives with to this day. The LBJ diehards who dismissed him as a mere "footnote in history" failed to understand how much damage one footnote can do when he doesn't mind whose toes he steps on and all the bigfeet turn out to have feet of clay. Thus, the paradox of Gene McCarthy: the revered liberal icon who destroyed the last successful liberal presidency. His act of insouciant regicide was the defining moment in the Democrats' modern history.

A few months earlier, a group of antiwar activists had formed something called the Alternative Candidate Task Force. It would have been easy to find some purer-than-thou leftist to run a doomed third-party campaign in the '68 election, but ACT calculated that it should surely be possible to talk a heavyweight establishment Democrat into opposing Johnson's re-nomination. They called on a score of senators and representatives, including their preferred choice, Robert Kennedy. But, presidency-wise, RFK was in the middle of his long Hyannis Hamlet routine, and ACT wound up settling instead for a fellow from a Minnesota hamlet. Sen-

ator McCarthy was nobody's idea of a dream candidate, least of all his: most of what passed for creative energy in his campaigning was devoted to the self-deprecating gags. But, with the big fish declining to nibble, ACT decided to go with Mister Available rather than Mister Right. He was a poet "mired in complexity," as one of his verses put it, and an unlikely man of action. Four days after the New Hampshire primary shocker, Bobby Kennedy entered the race himself, and nobody really needed McCarthy after that. But he acted when nobody else would, and so LBJ's '64 landslide was overturned by 28,791 New Hampshire voters, some student campaign workers, and a non-barnstorming, prematurely sidelined senator.

McCarthy was an unlikely standard-bearer. A tall, courtly figure who'd been a high-school teacher and a novice at a Benedictine seminary, he was what Denis Healy, Britain's former chancellor, likes to call a politician with a "hinterland"—interests beyond politics. He loved Minnesota's flora and fauna and seemed ill-suited as either a fawner or a floorer, a creep or a bruiser, into which categories most ambitious politicians fall. Elected to the House in 1948 and the Senate a decade later, he floated upward into the inner sanctum of Democratic power without ever seeming particularly engaged by the nuts and bolts of policy and legislation. From today's perspective, he had a parliamentary eloquence all but vanished from Washington. His colleague George McGovern hailed him for "a wit equal to Shaw's," though, like most political wit, it shrivels on citation. McGovern commends the riposte McCarthy made to Congressman Hill of Colorado, who in a debate on agricultural subsidies had brought up "some French girl" who'd been burnt at the stake. The gentleman

from Minnesota replied, "I don't think Joan of Arc went to her death in defense of flexible farm price supports!"

Hmm. If one regards political wit as Samuel Johnson did women's preaching, that's good enough, and better than most of the other examples of McCarthy's nimble tongue. To a voter bemoaning an Election Day choice of Johnson or Nixon, the senator said, "That's like choosing between vulgarity and obscenity, isn't it?"—which has a certain blunt truth to it but seems a little heavy-handed to be dignified as Shavian. Watching Bill Bradley's somnolent campaign style enervate and empty a New Hampshire diner in 2000, a friend whispered to me, "He's trying to do a Gene McCarthy. But it's harder than it looks." And even the original couldn't keep it up past New Hampshire, when the laconic-maverick-versus-imperial-president dynamic got muddled by the entry of RFK and by McCarthy's own complicated relationship with the Kennedy clan.

Yet McCarthy left his party utterly changed. If his moniker weren't already a political adjective, one might describe today's Democrats as a McCarthyite party: among the younger congressional bigwigs, Barbara Boxer was a campaign worker for the senator in '68; of the old lions, Ted Kennedy's reflexive hostility to the Iraq campaign is far closer to McCarthy's position than to either of his brothers'; and the Minnesotan's Senate contemporary, the octogenarian pork-meister Robert C. Byrd, was pictured last year pumping his fist at a MoveOn.org rally, in a scene that looks like a deranged burlesque of McCarthy's alliance with the antiwar youth of 1968.

After the 2004 election, Democrats took refuge in the conventional wisdom that "the American people don't change commanders-in-chief in the middle of a war." This conventional wisdom dates all the way back to, oh, 9:43 Eastern time on Election Night. Recent historical precedent suggests, *au contraire*, that wartime presidencies tend to end before hostilities do—or, at any rate, Democrat



presidencies do. In Senator McCarthy's case, he regarded Vietnam as a "costly exercise in futility," but justified a break with his own president on the narrower constitutional principle of whether the Johnson administration had the right to wage full-blown war without paying any heed to him.

Given that he'd voted for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizing more or less whatever escalation took the president's fancy, the principle at stake was not so easy to discern. At one level, it seems not unreasonable that, in a country with growing opposition to a war, one of the two parties should represent that opposition at an electoral level. On the other hand, had the mostly young and not terribly representative antiwar movement failed to find its "accidental instrument" in McCarthy, today's political map would look very different. There's something to be said for taking the view that, regardless of the merits of this or that foreign war, once you're in it you might as well win it. Alternatively, there's something to be said for the position that, if you're going to cut and run, do it quick and get over it, as the British did when they abandoned Aden, on the Arabian coast, the day before McCarthy launched his presidential campaign.

On November 29, 1967, the Union Jack was lowered over the city, and the high commissioner, his staff, and all Her Majesty's forces left. On November 30, the People's Republic of South Yemen was proclaimed—the only avowedly Marxist state in Araby. Yet the British shrugged off 130 years of colonial rule in Aden with nary a thought. Just one of those things, old bean. No sense making a fuss about it.

But to cut your losses and then mire yourself in an interminable psychological quagmire of your own has little to recommend it. "Vietnam casts long shadows," we're told, but not so much across the nation at large as over the Democratic Party. Forty years after McCarthy's swift, brutal destruction of the most powerful Democrat in the second half of the twentieth century, it remains unclear whether his party will ever again support a political figure committed to waging serious war, any war: Clinton bombed more countries in a little over six months than the supposed warmonger Bush has hit in six years, but, unless you happened to be in that Sudanese aspirin factory or Belgrade embassy, it was always desultory and uncommitted. Even though the first Gulf War was everything they now claim

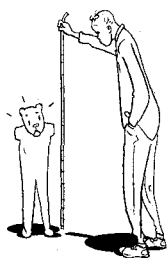
to support—UN-sanctioned, massive French contribution, etc.—John Kerry and most of his colleagues voted against it. Joe Lieberman is the loneliest gal in town as an unashamedly pro-war Democrat, and even Hillary Clinton's finding there are parts of the Democratic body politic that are immune to the restorative marvels of triangulation. Gene McCarthy's brief moment in the spotlight redefined the party's relationship with the projection of military force. That's quite an accomplishment. Whether it was in the long-term strategic interests of either the party or American liberalism is another question.

As for the senator himself, he all but vanished except as an idea—a gentle giant, an inspiration, the conscience of the movement, etc. The way they talked about him you'd think he'd been assassinated in 1968, too. In fact, he remained politically active, at least in the sense that he became a perpetual presidential candidate, the most reliable quadrennial flopperoo since Harold Stassen. He ran most recently against Bush Sr., Clinton, and Perot in 1992. Were you aware of that? Don't be embarrassed. The 42.4 percent "Clean for Gene" vote had dwindled down to a 0.2 percent largely Unseen for Gene vote by the time he ran against Ford and Carter in '76. In 1968, he was the indispensable man whose charm was that he didn't regard himself as such. Having been dispensed with by his party, he spent the next quarter-century insisting on his relevance.

Shortly after the 1968 campaign, his wife, Abigail, left him, though, as devout Catholics, they never divorced. And so it was with his party: they left the man but without ever being quite able to divorce themselves from the McCarthyite spirit of '68. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young and Clean for Gene was very heaven. ▀

Mark Steyn is a columnist for Britain's Telegraph Group, the Chicago Sun-Times, and other publications.

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A selective index to this month's issue, compiled by BENJAMIN HEALY

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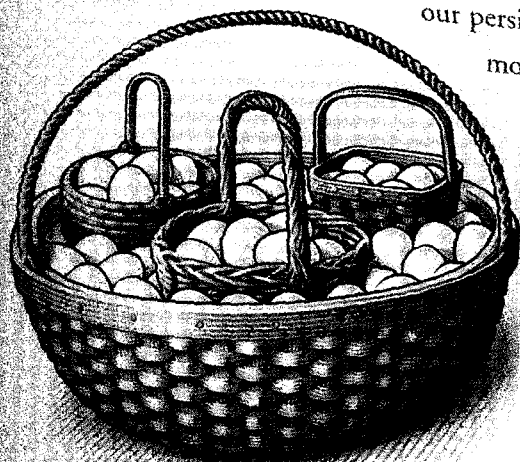
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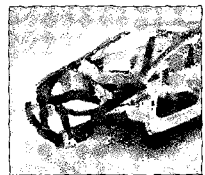
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